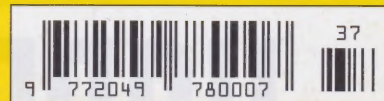


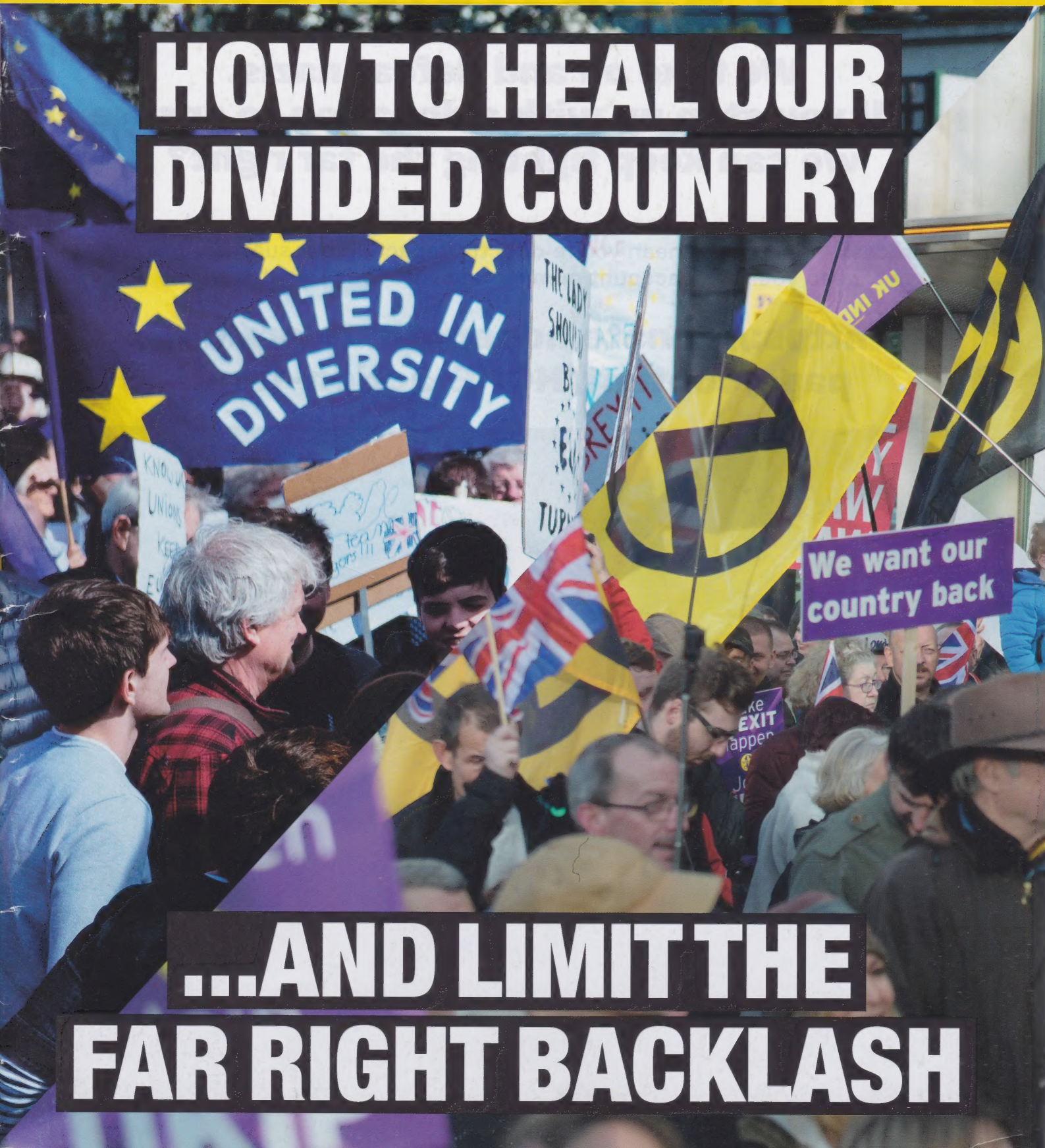
HOPE

Providing a positive
antidote to hate
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November-December 2018
Issue no. 37
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Nick Lowles

EDITOR

nick@hopenothate.org.uk



TIME TO HEAL OUR FRACTURED SOCIETY

BRITAIN IS POLARISED and divided as possibly never before. Whatever the outcome of the Brexit vote in Parliament, a large segment of the population will feel angry and resentful. At the same time the public's faith in our political system and the political parties is very low. These factors combined should be a warning of the dangers that possibly lie ahead. It should also motivate us all to find positive and consensual ways to bring our divided people together again.

A YEAR OF SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

2018 has been a year of expansion, change and success for HOPE not hate. We are doing more than we have ever done before, we operate across a greater number of areas of work than ever before and we are being taken more seriously than ever before.

Amongst our biggest achievements in 2018 has been our continual research exposes which have shone a light on the activities and extremism of the far right. Our work has led directly to leaders of National Action, a proscribed terrorist group, being sent to prison and the collapse of several far right groups. In Bradford and the West Midlands we have continued to pioneer effective community engagement, whilst our work on the National Conversation on Immigration and our groundbreaking Fear, Hope and Loss report has highlighted our growing use of data analytics and polling to help us understand society and target our work more effectively.

But we are under no illusions about the challenges ahead. 2019 will be a very difficult year in the UK and internationally. Whatever happens

with Brexit is likely to leave us more divided and politically disillusioned than before and hate crime is likely to rise. Across Europe we are likely to see big advances in the far right vote in May's European Elections and this in turn will influence domestic politics across the continent.

SCHOOL'S APPEAL

One of the undoubted success stories of HOPE not hate in the past couple of years has been the development of our Schools programme.

Using our Fear and HOPE data, we target the schools where young people have least interaction with minority communities and are most susceptible to far right ideas. From its early beginnings in schools in Essex and East Anglia, this is now a nationwide project and the statistics from the last school year are testament to its success.

We reached 16,983 students. We created 608 HOPE not hate Ambassadors – Year 9 pupils who completed a four-week course. We also offer teacher training in how to teach about issues of prejudice and discrimination, and how to spot signs of radicalisation in pupils and what to do next. Evaluations shows that 84% of attendees at our workshops with no understanding of prejudice come away with a strong understanding of the subject. We know what we do works and with growing numbers of young white people being referred to Channel and Prevent we also know the work is needed more than ever.

We are now looking to expand this vital work in 2019, so if you are able to please do support our Schools Appeal (see pages 54 and 55). ■

**HATE
HOPE
HATE**

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HNH uses research, education and public engagement to challenge mistrust and racism, and helps to build communities that are inclusive, celebrate shared identities and are resilient to hate.

Initially established to counter the electoral rise of the BNP, HOPE not hate mobilises communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate. HOPE not hate has over 214,000 online supporters and over 240,000 followers on Facebook. We are not aligned to any political party and will work with everyone wherever possible.

HOPE not hate comprises HOPE not hate Ltd and our charitable wing, HOPE not hate Charitable Trust.

www.hopenothate.org.uk

UNITY IS STRENGTH

Affiliate to Trade Union Friends of HOPE not hate to join with others in the fight against the far right in your workplace and community.

Trade unions are at the heart of the campaign and have a proud track record in standing up to the politics of hate and xenophobia promoted by UKIP, the BNP and EDL.

We know that unity in the workplace, regardless of race, religion or gender is key to winning better conditions, and this is just as true in society at large.



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A NEW HOPE NOT HATE PUBLICATION

Fear, Hope and Loss

HOPE not hate was founded on the very principle that if we are to counter narratives of hate, we must offer hope. We have long understood hate to often be a response to loss and an articulation of despair. But when given an alternative, especially one that understands and addresses their anger, most people will choose HOPE. By Rosie Carter.

Since 2011, we have tracked public attitudes to race, faith and belonging in our Fear and HOPE reports. While the debate often gets split into identity issues versus standard of living, our research, recommissioned four times over the last seven years, finds that drivers of hate are often more complex and identity issues are dialled up or down depending on how the economy is doing.

Fear, Hope and Loss is an exploration of what drives hate, and what offers resilience to these narratives; what offers hope. While individual factors are important in framing how we see the world, these factors sit within a broader context of how people experience daily life.

It is no coincidence that our fight against the far right has taken us to Oldham, Grimsby and Thurrock, but not Oxford, Hampstead or Guildford. Our report finds that it is communities which have lost out most to

globalisation, isolated coastal towns, post-industrial towns once reliant on single industry which have seen rapid decline. We find that a sense of hopelessness that the most hostile attitudes to migrants and minorities are concentrated.

There is no need to pander to prejudice in addressing the strong tide of anti-migrant sentiment. Given that the areas with the most hostile attitudes are those with some of the lowest levels of immigration in this country, reducing numbers of immigrants alone will have little impact of the attitudes of these people.

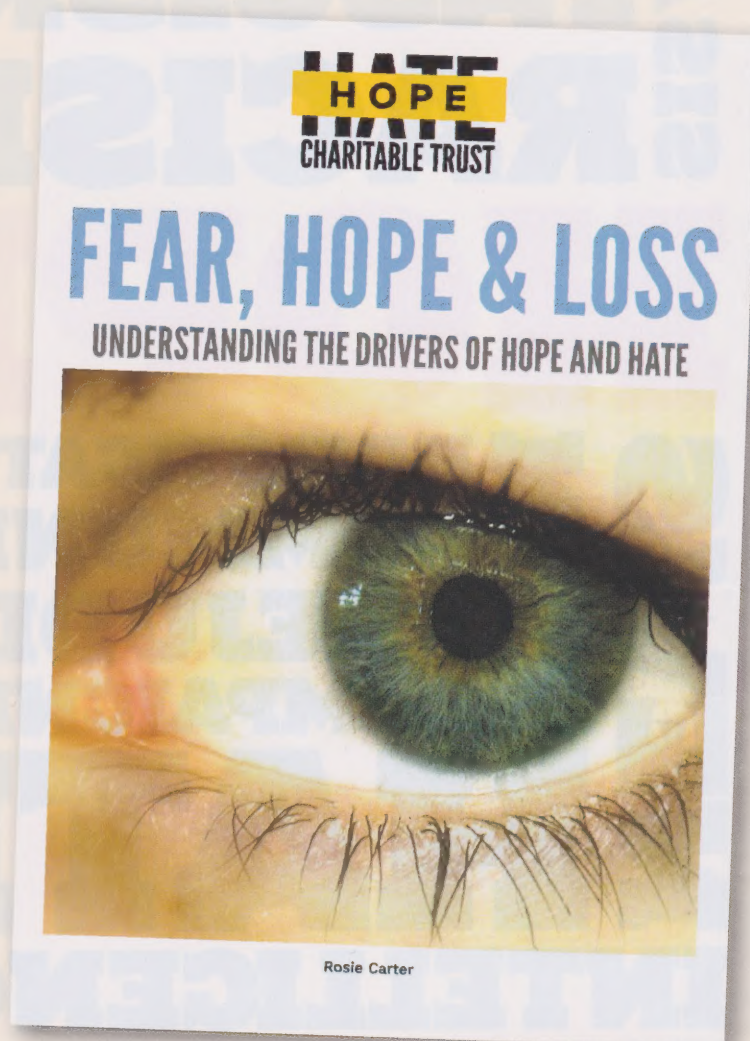
It is in communities which feel the greatest sense of loss where our fight against hate continues. It is about rebuilding these communities, equipping their young people with the skills that will enable them to compete more effectively in the modern global world and –

fundamentally – giving them a sense of hope in the future.

To fight fascism, we understand the need to take the economic link seriously. We can run all the community events in the world to bring people together, we can try to rationalise the immigration debate with facts, we can fight the media and online platforms to pull hateful

content. But none of this will be enough unless we can also offer real hope.

Fear, Hope and Loss sets the stage for us to move forward. In the coming months and years, we will focus on addressing the drivers of hate, and to ensure everyone can hope; from our research and data work, through to how we engage with communities on the ground. ■



**Fear, Hope and Loss is available at
www.hopenothate.org.uk**

CNN POLL: Antisemitism 'alive and well' across Europe: Tropes on Jewish power and ignorance on Holocaust history exposed

By Nick Ryan

A POLL ON antisemitism released by media network CNN this November has exposed some worrying truths.

The report on European attitudes towards Jews paints a troubling picture across the continent, and comes hot on the heels of another survey, from the EU's agency on fundamental rights, which found four out of five UK Jews believe antisemitism is a major problem in British politics (the worst record within the EU). Nearly a third are considering leaving Britain out of fears for their safety.

The EU report has found antisemitic hatred and discrimination on the rise across Europe, with attitudes in France, Germany, Belgium and Poland the most disturbing. The survey of 16,300 Jewish people in Europe found that almost a third avoid visiting Jewish sites because they feel unsafe.

In France, 95% of Jews believe antisemitism is a fairly or very big problem, up from 85% when last polled six years ago. Nine out of 10 Jews in France said they had faced expressions of hostility in the street.

The 12 member states surveyed account for 96% of the Jewish population in the EU. An average 41% of Jewish people polled had considered emigrating because they no longer feel safe.

CNN POLL: LACK OF HOLOCAUST KNOWLEDGE

According to CNN's ComRes survey – which interviewed more than 7,000 people across Europe (with over 1,000 respondents each in Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland and Sweden) – a third of Europeans said they knew just a little or nothing at all about the Holocaust.

However, writing in The Jewish Chronicle, Jonathan Boyd, of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, said:

"Intuitively, that sounds pretty awful. But actually... we have nothing to compare it with. Is that higher or lower than it was five or ten years ago? A serious assessment of that figure would at least ask that question."



1 IN 20 NEVER HEARD OF THE HOLOCAUST.

Lack of Holocaust knowledge is particularly striking among young people in France: One in five people aged 18- 34 said they had never heard of it.

In Austria 12% of young people said they had never heard of the Holocaust. Four out of 10 adults said they knew "just a little about it".

Across Europe, half of respondents said they know "a fair amount" about the Holocaust, while only one out of five people said they know "a great deal."

A third also believed that commemorating the Holocaust distracts from remembering other atrocities, with high levels of Germans, Austrians, Poles and Hungarians supporting the statement.

VICTIM BLAMING

Nearly one in five (18%) said antisemitism in their countries was a response to the everyday behaviour of Jewish people.

MISCONCEPTIONS: JEWISH POWER AND POPULATION

One in five surveyed by CNN think Jews have both too much influence in the media and too much influence in politics, while nearly one in four said Jews have too much influence in conflict and wars across the world.

There were enormous overestimates of the number of Jews in the world. About two-thirds of the respondents overestimated both the number of Jews in the world and the number in their own countries.

A quarter of Hungarians and a fifth of Brits and Poles thought the world over 20% Jewish. In fact 0.3 % of the world's population is Jewish. In other words, they thought 200 of 1000 people in the world are Jewish, when the reality is 3 in 1000.

Felix Klein, Germany's government commissioner for Jewish life, said the results of the survey were "appalling". European Jewish Congress President, Dr. Moshe Kantor found them "extremely worrying, if not overly surprising".

Rabbi Marvin Hier, of the Simon Wiesenthal Center said: "To see in the graveyard where six million Jews died in Europe that one-in-five never heard of the Holocaust ... it's not a reassuring message for the future of Europe."

Yad Vashem, Israel's state museum on the Holocaust, said that it was "deeply concerned" about the data, particularly on how many Europeans claimed to know little or nothing about the genocide.

However, there is some cause for hope in the survey results too. As Boyd writes, "... yes, a third knows little or nothing about the Holocaust, but over a half believes that it should be commemorated – not only to ensure that it won't happen again, but also to help combat antisemitism today."

You can order our new book, **Rewriting History: Lying, Denying & Revising the Holocaust**, from our shop: hopenothise.bigcartel.com

GERMANY AfD monitored by secret services?

FROM MICHAEL KLEIN IN BERLIN

OCTOBER'S REGIONAL elections saw the far right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) entering the last two remaining state parliaments where it had no seats. Meanwhile, debate has intensified as to whether the German intelligence services should watch the party.

Two recent events have especially contributed to the debate: one a Facebook entry by the head of the Lower Saxon branch of the AfD's youth organisation, Lars Steinke. He called Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg who attempted to kill Hitler on 20 July 1944 a "traitor" and a "coward". He had to resign. The second issue was an anti-migration rally held in Chemnitz on 1 September this year at which

several members of the AfD leadership showed up together with a violent mob of right-wing hooligans and nazis.

While some branches and individuals of the AfD and its youth organisation are under observation by the secret services, a general decision will be made by the end of this year. It is expected that a positive decision that will lead to the AfD being put under nationwide surveillance will create severe problems for the party as it might have negative consequences for civil servants (for example, police officers, soldiers, judges) who are AfD activists. It will also have a negative effect on the party by stigmatising it as a danger to the constitution and human rights.



Lars Steinke, Lower Saxon branch of the AfD's youth organisation

NETHERLANDS Dutch Secret Service reviews right-wing extremism

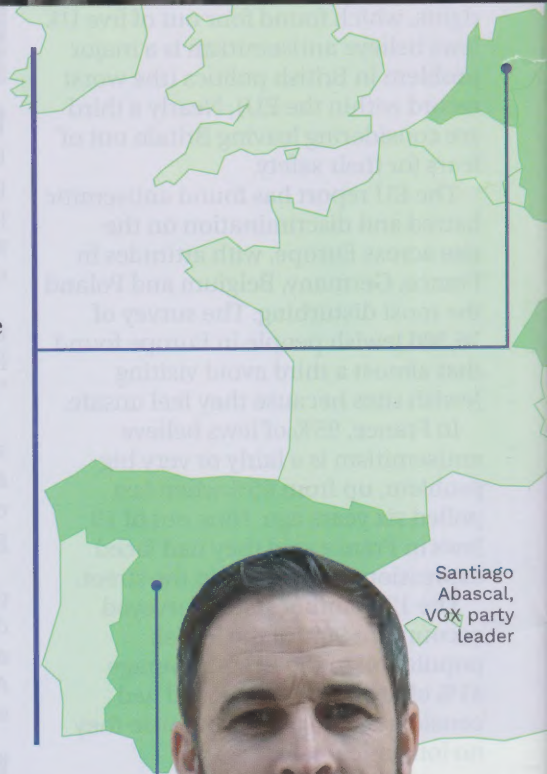
FOR THE FIRST time since 2010, the Dutch secret service has published a report on the activities and possible threat from right-wing extremists in the Netherlands. The report highlights recent developments within the extreme right.

First, it says, the classical organisational model of right-wing extremist groups and parties, recruiting members and supporters is becoming outdated. The secret service describes a new situation where part of the scene no longer organises within longer lasting structures but forms fluid networks and short-term coalitions. The extreme right tends to be more unpredictable due as a result.

A second visible change is increasing self-confidence within the extreme right. This is most marked when

extreme right and anti-fascist groups clash. In recent years, right-wing extremists sought confrontations but, because of the non-violent character of most of their activities, the threat of violence is estimated as low.

The secret service points out online activity as a third change. The report warns that a growing amount of aggressive online messages incite hate and violence. These messages can easily influence individuals or small groups to take matters in their own hands and launch violent activity. Another important aspect identified is that the growing extremist presence on social media systematically spreads hate and intimidation and creates a culture of fear that might pose a threat to the rule of law.



Santiago Abascal, VOX party leader

SPAIN New far right party to enter Parliament

SANDRA CORTÉS FOR ANTIFEIXISTES.ORG IN VALÈNCIA

THE FAR RIGHT VOX party, led by former Popular Party (PP) member Santiago Abascal, could win a seat in the next Spanish elections.

According to several polls, VOX, which vows to end regional autonomy, demands the deportation of immigrants and warns against the "Islamisation of Spain", could obtain about 5% of the vote. It would be the first time since 1979 that a far right party has managed win election to the Spanish Cortes. The crisis of the ruling PP, caused by corruption scandals, has pushed both the ultraliberal party Ciudadanos (Cs) and VOX to compete

for right-wing votes.

One of VOX's ideologues, Rafael Bardají, met Donald Trump's former campaign chief, Steve Bannon, in Washington in April. Bardají was adviser to several defence ministers of José María Aznar's PP, a keen promoter of Spanish participation in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and director of international policy at the PP's think tank, the FAES Foundation. In the European elections of 2014, VOX obtained 244,000 votes (1.5%), until now, the best result for a right-wing party since the death of fascist dictator Franco.



AUSTRIA Notorious FPÖ Interior Minister put on notice for undermining democracy

FROM MARTIN JORDAN IN VIENNA

HERBERT KICKL, the notorious strategic adviser and speechwriter to late Freedom Party (FPÖ) leader Jörg Haider as well as to current leader Heinz-Christian Strache, has been put on notice for undermining democracy in his role as Austria's Interior Minister.

Despite a strong public backlash against his subversive actions, he is far from being down for the count. Kickl dominates negative headlines on the criminals that his police force is catching by evoking Nazi language about wanting to "concentrate people in the asylum procedure in one place".

Attempting to gain control of key positions within the domestic security and intelligence agency BVT, through wrongful suspensions of leading members, he ordered raids on BVT offices and agents' private apartments by a tactical special police force that

confiscated, among other things, the BVT's files on far right student fraternities and their links with other right-wing extremists as well as on the FPÖ.

A recently published written memo by Kickl instructs police forces across the country to provide "undesirable media outlets" only with a bare minimum of requested information while directing the focus on sexual offences in public space. The FPÖ's senior coalition partner, the Christian conservative ÖVP under the leadership of 32-year-old Sebastian Kurz, only came forward after this recent memo to denounce any impediment of press freedom. FPÖ leader Strache, meanwhile, has described the whole affair as a staged media attack and warned his followers on social media not to fall for "dirty campaigning".



SERBIA Fascists and government hand in hand

FROM DAŠKO MILINOVIĆ IN NOVI SAD

THE RULING SERBIAN Progressive Party/SNS' strategy of filling the entire public administrative sphere with its minions and pseudo-NGOs has taken an openly fascist turn.

The fascist-Identitarian Nacionalna Avangarda (NA), set up earlier this year, is an "NGO" think tank that gathers well known faces of the far right and both untried and convicted war criminals as mentors. The new organisation lists "a return to the values of nation, family and tradition" as its goal and has, so far, big institutional backing.

In September, it organised a highly

promoted and opulent conference on national security with Serbia's state president Aleksandar Vučić and premier Ana Brnabić greeting the event and making introduction speeches.

Also present were the newly appointed ambassador of Italy and some other senior diplomatic figures. NA boasts about its direct connections to the Kremlin and Russian diplomats are public supporters and patrons. Unlike most or all Identitarian groups, however, it is heavily state-financed, backed by the Serbian government and its media machine.

Serbia's state president
Aleksandar
Vučić



Guest column...

Overcoming the Brexit stalemate

Lisa Nandy MP

IT'S ONE HELL of a mess. As we approach March 2019, Parliament is deeply divided and unable to agree on any course of action. Without an alternative, we leave in a few months with no deal at all.

Parliament is divided because the public is divided. For three years this angry, bitter debate has continued to polarise, dominated at the extremes by cries of betrayal and pushing out the pragmatic majority who yearn for a resolution. My inbox is full of demands: to stop Brexit, for a second referendum, to support the Withdrawal Agreement, and most often, to leave with no deal at all. Out on the doorstep it feels like the mood is hardening. We are more divided than ever.

The EU Referendum exposed deep divisions formed over many decades. It should have been a wake-up call. Across the country, while the cities voted overwhelmingly to remain, nearby towns voted in similarly large numbers to leave. This was not the first sign that all was not well in our towns. We had years of falling turnout that we thought was apathy because we couldn't hear that roar on the other side of silence. The dramatic surge in



In Ireland, Citizens' Assemblies have been used to break deadlock on issues as controversial as abortion and equal marriage.

support for UKIP could not be ignored. It was dismissed as racism but only a small few paused to ask how it happened in towns that have consistently rejected openly racist parties and fought fascism for decades.

On almost every social measure – immigration, social security, the EU – towns and cities have been moving apart for decades. This reflects changing demographics over recent decades as industry in our towns has declined and not been replaced and successive governments have placed investment in towns in the hope that the benefits will trickle out to the surrounding towns. As we've shown at the Centre for Towns, cities have grown younger while towns – which were once home to a young population – have grown much older. The loss of working age population has left us at the sharp

end of the social care crisis and agency work, unable to sustain high streets, pubs, banks and bus networks. Young people who left for work or study increasingly found when they looked back there was little to return home to. Families were split apart and close communities undone. Eight years of cuts to public services and local spending have made this much worse.

No wonder then that the Hope Not Hate and Centre for Towns report *Fear, Hope and Loss* found a sense of hopelessness in many of those towns that voted to leave. Alongside this, people in towns are significantly more likely to feel that politicians don't care about them or their area. The loss of hope coupled with a belief that politics cannot change it is a perfect storm, and

fertile ground for a newly emboldened far right.

This is the real story behind the Brexit divisions. It will not be solved by a tug of war between advocates of leave and remain. It can only be solved by dialogue and consensus. In Ireland, Citizens' Assemblies have been used to break similar deadlock on issues as controversial as abortion and equal marriage. There is still time to establish a similar consensus on our future relationship with the EU. It would pave the way for a substantially different approach in which towns and cities were handed real political and economic power, to allow us to rebuild our economies around the potential we have, not the problems we pose. Brexit was a political earthquake. It demands a similar response. ■

Lisa Nandy is the Labour MP for Wigan

Healing our divided country

By Nick Lowles



Brexit is paralysing Britain. Parliament is deadlocked and the British people appear equally divided. They are frustrated and angry. And all the while, other key political and economic issues are ignored.

And this paralysis is set to continue for years to come. Even if Prime Minister Theresa May manages to get Parliament to agree her Brexit deal, which is currently looking highly unlikely, the real negotiations on what the final deal looks like will take a minimum of two years to complete and be as every bit as divisive – if not more so – than what we are experiencing now.

Not only will our political discourse become even more fractious and

acrimonious, but the relationship between the British public and its political institutions to continue to decline. A recent poll in the Sunday Times showed only 11% of people thought our politics was working. A poll commissioned by HOPE not hate and Best for Britain in July found that 61% of people felt that there was not a political party that represented their views.

The combination of this loss of trust in the political system, the impasse over Brexit and a bitterly divided nation is a gift to the far right and extremists generally. If people do not think that the political system can deliver, they will increasingly look elsewhere.

We can't go on like this.

A POLARISED SOCIETY

Of course there is no simple solution to our Brexit divisions. It has polarised opinion, divided families and communities and generated anger and optimism in equal dose. What is striking about the issue is just how polarised society is and how little apparent appetite there appears for compromise.

In a 10,000 sample YouGov poll commissioned by HOPE not hate and Best for Britain in July, we asked people to rank on a scale of 1-100 whether they thought of themselves as a Remain voter or Leave voter. An incredible 58% of respondents saw themselves as either the most hardline Remainer (1-10%) or most hardline Leaver voter (90-100%).

>>

A Brexit backlash?

MANY PEOPLE have said that pausing or even attempting to reverse Brexit will cause a huge backlash and embolden the far right. Some have even suggested that it would lead to mass civil disorder on the streets and it is the fear of such a backlash that has convinced many in the Labour Party that the risks of opposing Brexit would be too high. Some people who had said this are genuinely worried. Others are using the spectre of violence as an argument for inaction, or against a 'final say' referendum.

Whatever their rationale, are they correct?

There is no doubt that there would be a huge and angry backlash from pro-Leave voters if Brexit was overturned or even paused. Obviously this could be reduced if the pause was to find a consensus to deliver Brexit or get a better deal with the EU. But even then there would still be anger that they were being cheated out of their Brexit by Remain-voting politicians.

What is less clear is the form this anger will take. One has to question whether the people who would be most angry – white men over 50 – are likely to riot on the streets. It is doubtful. One only has to look at Stephen Lennon's (aka Tommy Robinson) 'Brexit Betrayal' demonstration in early December to see how Brexit motivates an older audience than those who attended his earlier anti-Muslim or 'Free Tommy' demos.

When asked to give three emotions from a choice of eight, only 11% of 18-24 year olds said that they would be angry if Britain remained in the EU. It is only when you get to men over 45 that you see the anger levels hit the 40% figure.

Of course there is a risk that the football hooligan gangs, and the sort of men attracted to this orbit, could cause trouble, there is no indication the football mobs are that motivated by Brexit in the same way they are by Islamist terrorism or grooming gangs. Very few football hooligans took up the call from the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) to back the Brexit Betrayal march.

What is much more likely is that the Brexit backlash will take on a political form, with former UKIP leader Nigel Farage already indicating his intention to launch a new right wing populist party in the event of Brexit being betrayed. Our polling suggests that this could attract 15-20% of the population.

What should also be remembered is that there is likely to be a strong sense of betrayal even if Brexit happens. Most Leave voters want a total break from the EU, including a complete end to free movement of people, a dramatic decline in *all* immigration, and a total break from EU rules and regulations. Anything less will make them unhappy. MPs who think they are honouring the Referendum result whilst simultaneously wanting Britain to have close alignment with the EU rules and the single market are in for a big shock. They will be viewed as betraying the spirit of the Referendum, especially when – as Rosie Carter so graphically illustrates in her article on Brexit optimism – their hoped for economic improvements do not happen.

Let us also not delude ourselves that there will be no consequences with a 'no deal' Brexit. If the dire predictions of food and even medicine shortages are proved correct, then there is a real chance of civil unrest as looting and hoarding occurs.

And let us also not forget the rise in hate crime in the direct aftermath of the 2016 Referendum to realise that anger and hatred can rise even from the winning side.

A significant number of people are going to be angry and feel betrayed whatever happens, but rather than that being a reason for not doing what we think is the correct decision for the country as a whole we need to redouble our efforts to heal our divided country and forge consensus.

With such hardline views on both sides, perhaps we should not be surprised that Parliament is deadlocked too.

But somewhere the deadlock has to be broken because otherwise we could be heading for a 'no deal' Brexit with all the economic and social consequences that will bring. And this is going to require some dialogue and compromise amongst those who hold very different views.

While HOPE not hate has strongly opposed a hard Brexit and more recently we have been campaigning for the British public to have the final say on any deal, we also recognise that if we overcome these divisions and polarisation and avoid a no deal Brexit then a way needs to be found to bring people together, both to get resolution through Parliament but more importantly to bring to heal the divisions within society.

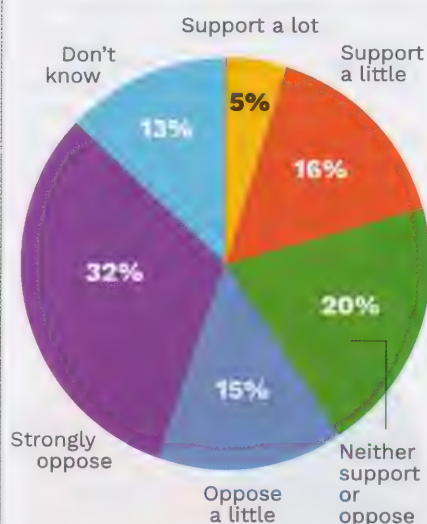
Many of those campaigning for a second referendum have done so simply as a means to overturn the 2016 result and keep the UK in the European Union. Understanding and addressing the issues to what led to Brexit in the first place and healing the divisions in society have been largely ignored in the pursuit of keeping Britain in the EU, exacerbating the anger felt by many people who voted Leave in the first place.

There are many notable exceptions to this and certainly there has been a growing understanding that we need to address the causes of Brexit, including groups like Best for Britain, and the working group brought together by Hugo Dixon's In Facts team, who recently produced the Common Ground report. But too many Remainers have been largely indifferent to how reversing Brexit will be seen by those who voted Leave.

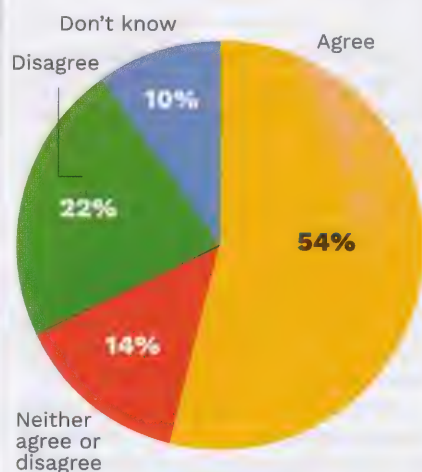
While some of the apocalyptic vision of riots on the streets might not materialise, there will certainly be huge anger and a feeling of betrayal if Brexit is simply reversed as if the anger that led to the 2016 referendum never existed. Some might see that as a price worth paying for avoiding the economic slump that will come with Brexit, especially a no deal Brexit. But we will be left with the same causes of Brexit, alongside a collapse in trust and a rise in people's anger.

One idea that HOPE not hate has been pursuing is that of a Remain Dividend. If Brexit is going to cost Britain £100-200bn, then it could be put to the people that this money would be better spent on a special renewal plan, a British Marshall Plan,

Q.3 From what you know, to what extent do you support or oppose Theresa May's Brexit deal?



With Parliament deadlocked, the British people should now decide on whether Britain backs Theresa May's deal, makes a clean break from the EU or stays in the EU



to rebuild and Britain's crumbling and forgotten communities. In this way some of the underlying issues of economic decline and political abandonment that led so many working class people to vote Leave could be addressed. We must address the problems those communities face anyway, but in addition, to win, Remain must have a radical offer for voters. To win, Remain cannot be the status quo option as it was in 2016, at a time when the status quo was not working for so many people.

If there was a simple re-run of the 2016 Referendum without any fundamental change then Remain is likely to be defeated again, and the divisions in society will only get wider.

The argument for a second vote has moved on since the People's Vote campaign was launched 12

months ago. The political situation has fundamentally changed. With Parliament deadlocked and no one solution seemingly being able to win the support of MPs, putting the issue back to the voters to make the final decision has some merit. It could also be attractive to Leave campaigners as a public vote might be the only way they could secure their vision of Brexit given that more MPs favour staying in the EU to a 'no deal' Brexit.

There is now an argument to say that a second vote is actually the best way to break the deadlock. With so many people disliking Theresa May's deal, with our polling indicating that just 5% of people "strongly support" it, there is likely to be widespread disappointment if it is passed, a new vote could be the best way of ensuring that there is popular endorsement for what happens.

FINDING CONSENSUS

In a poll commissioned by HOPE not hate earlier this month, 54% of voters agreed with the statement: 'With Parliament deadlocked, the British people should now decide on whether Britain backs Theresa May's deal, makes a clean break from the EU or

stays in the EU'. Only 22% of people opposed this view.

Whilst support for this proposition was predictably high amongst 2016 Remain voters, 41% of Leave voters also backed it and just 27% disagreed.

There also appears to be an appetite for finding alternative ways to break the log jam and to try to find consensus, not least because even more divisive negotiations lie ahead.

"The blunt truth is that two years from now, parliament could again be in stalemate – in exactly the same way as today," former Prime Minister Gordon Brown wrote in the *Financial Times*. "By then, if current events are anything to go by, the breakdown of trust – already at an all-time low – will have accelerated. Allegations of betrayal on both sides will be the stock in trade of an ever more poisonous national debate. Remainers will still feel cheated by what they consider the false propaganda of the 2016 referendum; the young will still feel their future has been mortgaged by the old; and Leavers will be even more embittered because the promises made about a clean break and being better off will not yet be honoured."

>>



The very complaints that caused these voters to choose Brexit – feeling locked out and not listened to – are, they will argue, simply being confirmed by a repeat of the same old party bickering and incestuous power games.”

“With years of debate ahead, we need a new way of enabling British people’s voices to be heard.”

Brown suggests creating a platform to allow discussion of the key drivers behind the Brexit vote – immigration, sovereignty and the state of our industrial towns and regions. By exploring both the causes and consequences of Brexit, he hopes that consensus can be forged.

HOPE not hate tested out Brown’s proposition with voters and found that 48% of people supported the idea with 28% disagreeing. While again Remain voters were much more likely to support the idea, it was still supported by 33% of Leave voters whilst opposed by 47% (though of course this could have been Tory/UKIP voters rejecting an idea from a former Labour Prime Minister).

CITIZENS’ ASSEMBLY

Brown’s idea suggestion has been adopted and developed by others. Writing in this edition of *HOPE not hate*, Lisa Nandy writes that the divisions “can only be solved by dialogue and consensus.” She backs the types of Citizens’ Assemblies have been used in Ireland to break similar deadlock on issues as controversial as abortion and equal marriage. “There is still time to establish a similar consensus on our future relationship with the EU. It would pave the way for a substantially different approach in which towns and cities were handed real political and economic power, to allow us to rebuild our economies around the potential we have, not the problems we pose.”

Another support of Citizens Assemblies is Neal Lawson, from the left of centre think tank Compass. Writing in *Open Democracy*, he sees a link between Brexit and the on-going democratic deficit in Britain. “Brexit, a crisis of economy, culture, identity, belonging – a crisis of the past, the present and the future, now becomes a constitutional crisis,” he wrote.

“It’s not just that Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn have gamed the system for their own personal and political ends – it is the system.

“More than anything, the crisis it took Brexit to finally surface is revealed as a crisis of democracy. Over decades our politicians have refused to heed the signs of this democratic decline.

Instead of managing the tricky tensions, paradoxes and compromises of a complex twenty-first century society, our democratic system marginalized and humiliated so many people, for so long, that on that fateful day of June 23, 2016, they took their revenge. People who have been overlooked, left dispirited, desperate and angry, when presented with the voting equivalent of a ‘Break in Case of Emergency’ moment, did exactly that. We now live in the shattered slivers of that climatic moment.”

With Parliament so deadlocked and seemingly unable to come to a decision, it is now time for the British public to take back control and make the decision themselves. While this will eventually require a second vote to decide on exactly how we should resolve this issue, Article 50 should be paused while assemblies created in every region of the country for large groups of people to come together to discuss Brexit and see if through dialogue they can find answers to some of the most divisive issues and arrive at compromises.

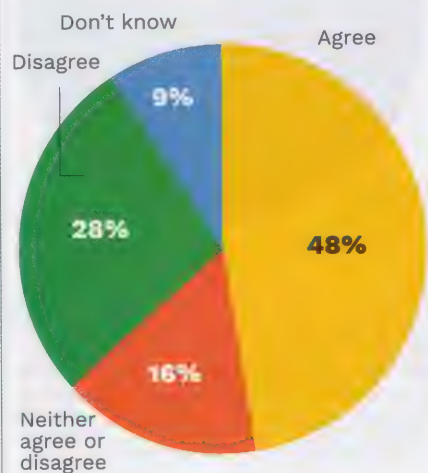
A Citizens’ Assembly has become a firm fixture in Ireland and since 2016 it has met on 12 occasions to discuss some of the most contentious and divisive issues in the country. Participants are selected to be broadly representative of the Irish electorate and are brought together to deliberate on specific topics and formulate after discussion a proposition to be put to the people.

“Presented with evidence and experts and given time to discuss and debate all the complexities – citizens, freed from Party blinkers, can come up with sensible solutions to the most complex and pressing problems,” says Neal Lawson. “It worked recently in Ireland on the divisive issue of abortion and united the country precisely because the process was fair and transparent.”

In the context of Brexit, a Citizens’ Assembly would be convened to decide between no deal, a deal or a second referendum. The assembly would take a few months to deliberate and decide, meaning Article 50 would need to be temporarily delayed. Another option that has been floated is that there are several regional Assemblies, involving a few hundred people each, which then feed into a central group.

While Parliament cannot be bound by an external group, the moral and political pressure to abide by the decisions of the Assembly would be irresistibly strong.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Politicians clearly cannot decide how to resolve the issue of Brexit and the country is deeply divided – therefore it would be better to follow former Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s advice to pause the process and seek a consensus by gathering ordinary people together to discuss the options.”



There will be those who will cry foul and strongly object. Many will say that the people have spoken so Parliament just has to get on and enforce Brexit.

Yes, 52% of people voted for Britain to Leave the EU but there was no indication of what type of Brexit they were voting for. For some it was a complete break from the EU, but for others it means leaving but remaining closely aligned. It is also fair to say that when people voted in 2016 they did so without necessarily thinking about the economic and political trade-offs this would involve. Three-quarters of people in our July poll said that they “didn’t realise how complicated and difficult Brexit would be”.

There will be others who will argue that we live in a representative democracy and we elect our MPs to resolve these difficult issues. But after 30 months these MPs have failed to sort out Brexit and with them seemingly deadlocked and the clock ticking down to a dangerous no-deal Brexit, another solution has to be found.

With Parliament deadlocked, something has to change and bringing people together to discuss a way forward and/or asking the British public to make the final decision seems the best way to solve this crisis and being the process of healing the divisions in society.

If something does not change then we should expect division, disillusionment and possibly disorder.

New Brexit party appeal

By Nick Lowles

Former UKIP leader Nigel Farage has announced his intention to launch a new political party in anticipation of a betrayal of Brexit, either by the imposition of a 'soft Brexit' or Brexit being reversed. In creating this new party, Farage hopes to replicate the right wing populist revolution that is sweeping across Europe and North America.

Polling by HOPE not hate and Best for Britain found that 17% of Britons could support this new party.

Farage is a household name and this alone will ensure that this new party attracts mass support and huge media attention. A 10,383 sample poll, carried out in July, found that 23% of the adult population had a positive attitude towards Farage, with 7% identifying with him very strongly, another 7% strongly and 9% slightly.

He will be supported in his efforts by David Canzini, a key aide of the right wing election guru Lynton Crosby. Farage's attack on

UKIP's relationship with Stephen Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) is as much about framing himself as less extreme as it is about killing off UKIP.

Our polling asked the public how likely they would be to support a new party set up by former UKIP leaders with a strong anti-Islamist and anti-immigration slant and a commitment to implement Brexit. It found that 8% of people said that they were "very likely" to

support this party, while a further 9% said that they were "likely" to support it.

The overwhelming majority of people attracted to a potential new party voted UKIP in 2015 and the Conservative Party in 2017. While it would attract some Labour voters, a new party is likely to gain three Tory voters for every one Labour voter.

Unsurprisingly, its support will be drawn almost exclusively from people who voted Leave in the 2016 Referendum. A third of all those who voted Leave would be attracted to the new party, compared to just 3% of Remain voters. Two out of five people who voted Conservative in the 2017 General Election and Leave in the 2016 Referendum would be likely or very likely to back the new party. This drops to one in five Labour Leave voters, though this represents a much smaller proportion of Labour voters overall.

Support for a new Farage party is more likely to come from men than women (22% v 14%), be older (26% of over 65's compared to just 13% of 25-49 year olds) and drawn from social groups A, C2 and E.

Farage has two electoral options if there is a General Election within the next six months. Declare the political system bankrupt and stand as many candidates as possible across the country, or simply target Remain-supporting MPs in the hope of seeing Brexit-supporting MPs returned.



Nigel Farage has announced his intention to launch a new political party. Photo Michael Vadon

Both strategies will have their appeal to a new party, but both are quite different and will have long term consequences for the direction and longevity of the party.

A targeted Brexit approach could also have unintended consequences as it not only could be squeezed by a pro-Brexit Tory Party but it could actually help divide the Brexit vote in key marginals. A broader anti-politics party would have to take on all MPs equally if it were to have any credibility in the eyes of voters and this would fundamentally change its core audience and potential donor support.

Farage is Britain's most controversial politician and while 7% of people strongly identify with him, 53% of people do not identify with him at all – a far higher figure than any other political figure. Amongst 2017 Labour voters, 85% have an unfavourable view of Farage, with just 11% viewing him positively. ■

A party founded by former members of UKIP, on the political far-right, committed to opposing Islamism and immigration and supporting Brexit

	Total	2017 election vote					2017 election vote + 2016 Referendum			
		Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Remain	Leave	Con Remain	Con Leave	Lab Remain	Lab Leave
Very likely	8	14	4	1	1	16	1	19	1	9
Fairly likely	9	15	5	4	2	18	2	21	2	12
TOTAL LIKELY	17	29	9	5	3	34	3	40	3	21
Fairly unlikely	9	14	6	5	4	15	7	16	3	12
Very unlikely	56	44	73	81	83	36	77	32	86	47
TOTAL UNLIKELY	65	58	79	86	87	51	84	48	89	59
Don't know	17	13	13	8	10	16	12	12	8	20

They've been scapegoated and used as a bargaining chips, now EU nationals are shunning Britain

By Elisabeth Pop

FOR THE PAST two and a half years, EU nationals in the UK – our family members, our neighbours, our work colleagues – have been used as bargaining chips in the Brexit negotiations and as scapegoats for the austerity that research now clearly shows has caused housing pressures, the NHS crisis and 1 in 5 Brits to live in poverty, thus making a sizable number of people vote leave on 23 June 2016.

But not only is their uncertainty not coming to an end, the PM seems determined to continue using them as a political punching bag.

"EU nationals, regardless of the skills or experience they have to offer, can jump the queue ahead of engineers from Sydney or software developers from Delhi." This utterly un-British remark, and the relentless Government rhetoric that has "ending free movement" as a top promise, is how Theresa May is choosing to sell her Brexit deal. While the PM consequently said she regretted the "queue jumpers" remark, the fact remains that she felt not only comfortable recycling the xenophobia and scapegoating that Farage & Co. pushed in the run up to the 2016 Referendum, but she believes continuing the "us and them", "divide and rule" strategy when it comes to immigration is the best way she will get her Bad Brexit Deal through Parliament.

Unsurprisingly, given that the PM decided to play politics with people's lives and reinforce a hostile environment, many EU nationals have already decided to leave Britain. ONS figures published in November show that EU workers are quitting the UK at the fastest rate since at least 1997. The 132,000 drop in the number of citizens from other EU countries working in Britain has seen firms struggling to hire and is adding to the NHS staffing crisis.

Part of the biggest research project ever undertaken on EU nationals in the UK working in public services, Best for Britain issued Freedom of Information requests to over a thousand NHS trusts, universities, fire services, ambulance services, national

■ Over 70,000 EU nationals are currently employed across 237 public bodies, making them a pillar behind UK public services

■ Nearly 11,000 will leave by the end of this year alone.

■ The NHS is hemorrhaging staff, with 26,000 having left since 2016 and a terrifying rise of 22% in the year after the referendum. NHS trusts are facing the most severe Brexitodus include King's College Hospital and University Hospital Southampton, with the number of EU nationals leaving rising by 94% and 40% in 2017.

■ Universities across the country have also been hammered by the impact of Brexit, with over 20,000 EU nationals having left since 2016. Among the worst affected were prestigious institutions such as Glasgow and Cambridge where the number of leavers ballooned by a quarter – posing a significant threat to their position at the top of world rankings for universities.

Source: Best for Britain, Nov 2018

parks, local councils and government departments. The analysis, published in November, revealed a massive 40,000 EU nationals have left since the Brexit referendum, an estimated 15% increase between 2016 and 2017.

And why would they stay given the rise in hate incidents and the fact that the withdrawal agreement does not alleviate their uncertainty? When it comes to EU citizens rights, the withdrawal agreement highlights the fact that they need to register for a new immigration system called "settled status", that they need to renew periodically and cannot be out the country for more than 5 years before they lose it all together.

The application fee is £65 and the process as it stands is not accessible to vulnerable individuals, people who do not have a straight forward

working history or people who are not IT literate. In fact, the application app does not work on Apple phones or on old Android phones, so the Home Office had to postpone the next trial in order to sort the technical issues before it asks 3 million people to register starting 30 March 2018. Not only will the Home Office have to process over 4,000 applications per day until the end of 2021 – and we've seen how well that went in the Windrush scandal, but it is only an electronic status that can leave EU nationals vulnerable to discrimination in employment, housing or when accessing the NHS.

If that was not bad enough, under the withdrawal agreement EU citizens rights are not part of British primary legislation, in other words any future government can amend it or scrap it and are separated from voting rights – a pillar of integration in any democracy.

EU nationals who are lucky enough to qualify for "settled status" will be good enough to pay taxes, which research has shown time and time again accounts for more than they take in benefits, but there is no guarantee that they will keep their right to vote and democratically represent their local communities past the May 2019 local elections.

Things can only get worse. While the Immigration white paper has been postpones past the 11 December key vote, sources close to the PM claim that she is determined to push ahead with 11 months- long visas, that do not allow for integration or a path to settlement, and the £30,000 threshold to qualify as a "skilled migrant". In other words, all the EU nationals who are nurses, junior doctors, teachers, firefighters or those who keep the hospitality and construction sectors going, but do not earn this arbitrary amount are not welcome and not wanted.

The PM seems happy to use and abuse EU nationals now, but we should all dread the day EU nationals will shun Britain in their droves. Our communities, our economy and our culture will be all the poorer for it! ■

BREXIT

optimism shift

HOPE not hate's polling since 2011 has tracked levels of optimism across the country, as we have found that pessimism serves a driver of hate. But the Brexit vote has reversed the trend whereby areas which were once most pessimistic saw a surge in optimism with the vote to Leave. Conversely, liberal, wealthy cities and university towns, once the most hopeful about the future have become pessimistic, concerned about what Brexit will mean for their futures. With economic projections, suggesting the poor will be worst hit by an economic downturn after Britain leave the EU, in areas experiencing this newfound optimism, this shift in optimism and pessimism could open up opportunities for far-right, populist exploitation. By Rosie Carter

Our *Fear and HOPE* reports, which measure attitudes to race, faith and belonging, have traced optimism and pessimism since 2011, identified as a key driver behind attitudes. People who are more optimistic about their own lives tend to hold more liberal views than those who feel pessimistic. People who are more optimistic tend to feel more in control of their own lives and are less likely to hold negative views toward immigration, multiculturalism, and are less likely to be prejudiced against Muslims.

The *Fear and HOPE* research we carried out in February 2016 identified a shift towards cautious optimism, as economic recovery following the 2008 financial crisis restored a sense of greater security and contentment. From 2011 – where only around a quarter of the hostile tribes felt optimistic about the future

– to 2016, pessimism was more of a minority view and optimism increased across the board.

Our new analysis, which uses the sophisticated data analytics technique MRP (multilevel regression with post-stratification) allows us to map attitudes, to paint a much more detailed picture with our data including portraits of attitudes in each constituency in Britain.

Before the referendum, in February 2016, our MRP data shows that the most optimistic constituencies were mostly areas within core cities and prosperous university towns.

The MRP analysis shows that eighteen of the most optimistic constituencies in February 2016 were London boroughs, with Bath and Edinburgh North and Leith also among the most hopeful for the future. Among the least optimistic in our pre-referendum poll were Grimsby, Rotherham, Hartlepool, Blaenau Gwent

and Boston & Skegness. In all these areas less than 40% of people felt optimistic for the future – just 36% in Clacton, the least optimistic constituency in the UK.

As our new *Fear, Hope and Loss* report suggests, pessimistic areas also host greater concentrations of people with the most hostile attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism, while the core city areas are among the most confidently multicultural.

The most pessimistic constituencies were also among those with the strongest Leave vote in the 2016 EU referendum, while the areas with the highest levels of optimism were among the strongest Remain voting constituencies. Brexit, however, reversed this trend in hopefulness.

The results of the EU referendum had a clear impact on how people felt about the future, and showed just how divisive

the referendum result and Brexit process could be. Immediately after the referendum, it was clear that some felt positive change was in the air, while for others the shock of the result felt unsettled their whole outlook on life.

We conducted another *Fear and HOPE* poll immediately after the EU referendum, which separates the population into six identity 'tribes', each with a different profile on their attitudes to identity, belonging and economic outlook. At one end sit liberals and multiculturalists, while at the other sit those who are hold latent and actively hostile views. In the middle sit a more ambivalent group, sensitive to economic conditions which may drive them towards more hostile views, and an economically secure group with cultural anxieties.

We found a surge in optimism from the tribes with the most hostile views

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towards immigration and multiculturalism: latent hostiles, active enmity and culturally concerned groups. These were all groups which had previously had been more pessimistic and most likely to have voted to Leave

the European Union, five months prior to the vote. The referendum result was seen to offer a window for opportunity for many in these groups. The messaging of the Leave campaign (around control) was likely to have

resonated with these groups, and it may have seemed that it was finally possible to take control and challenge some of the root factors for the long-standing pessimism of the two hostile groups. The patterns of optimism

for confident multiculturals and mainstream liberals reflected almost the opposite. These groups were the most optimistic in 2011, becoming more so between 2011 and 2016. Many in these groups experienced

Figure 1: Fear and HOPE 2017 I am optimistic about the future

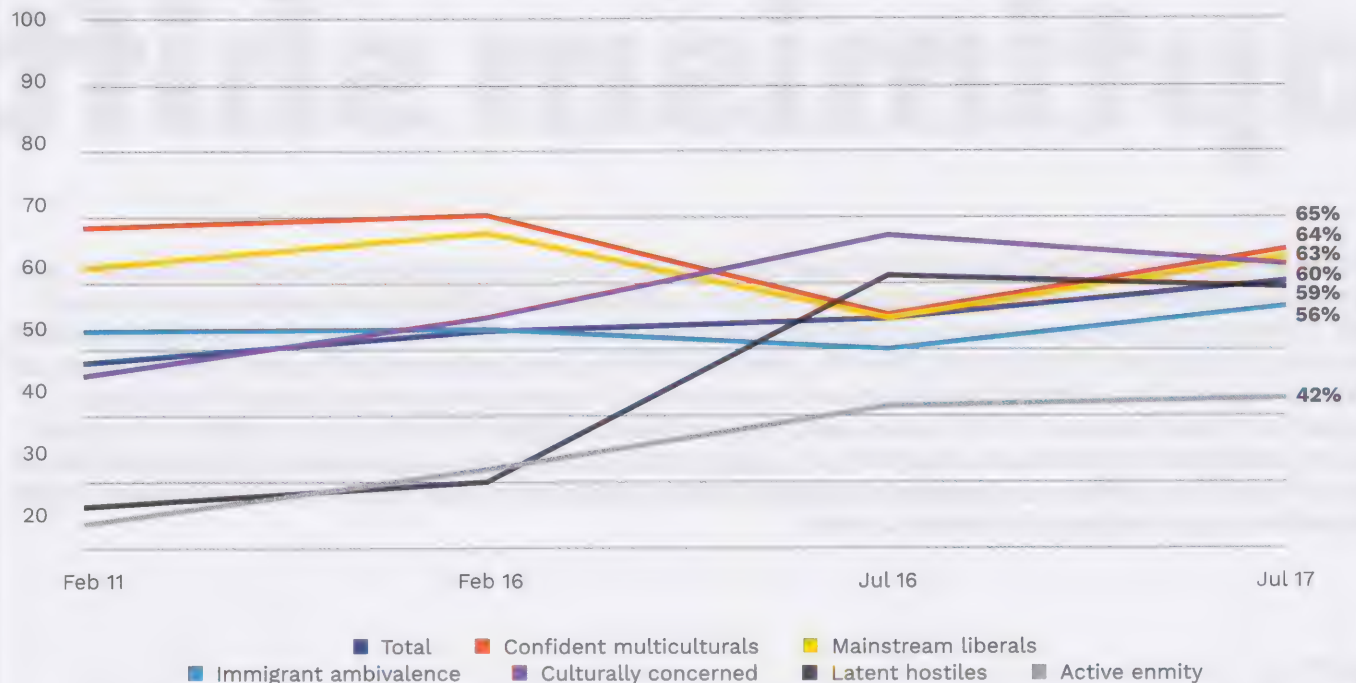


Figure 2: YouGov poll July 2018 Do you think that Economic prospects for you and your family will be better if the UK remains in the EU, or if the UK leaves the EU, or do you not think it doesn't makes much difference either way?

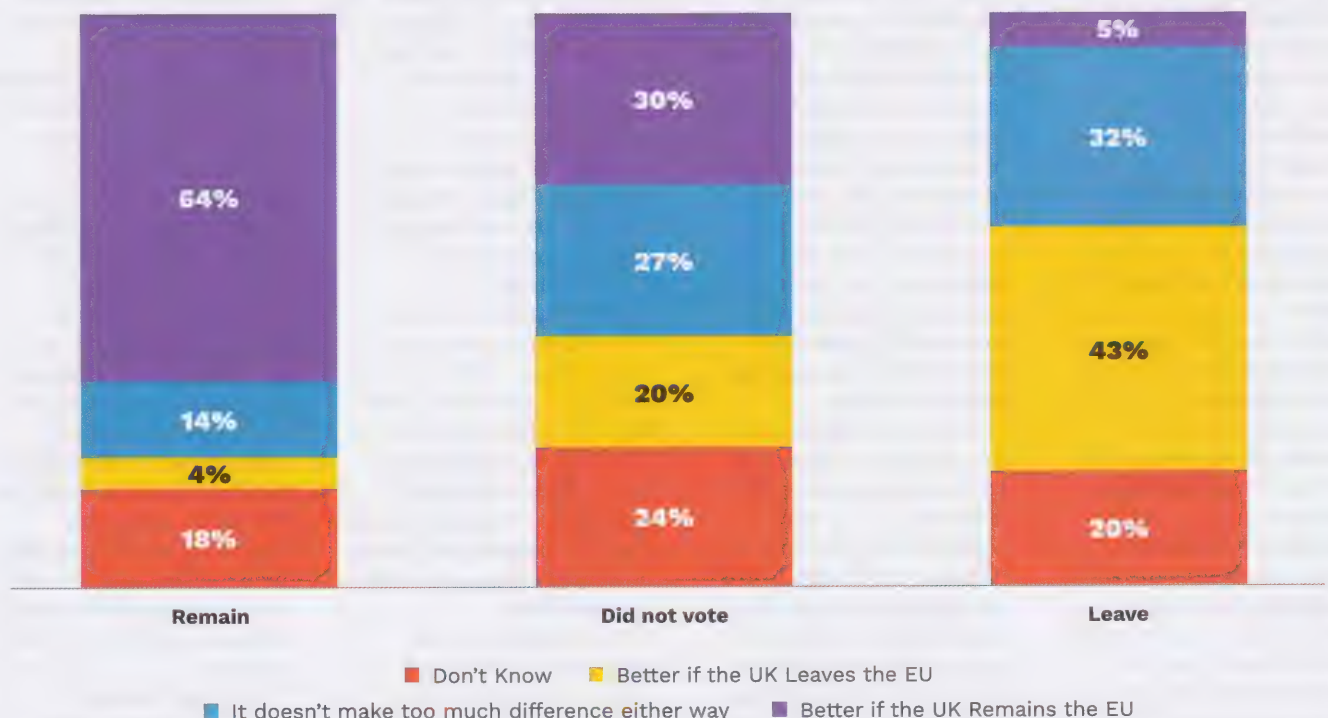


Figure 3: Leave voters in the top 5 Leave voting constituencies

Constituency	Leave vote (%) 2016 referendum	% agree: Economic prospects for you and your family will be better if the UK remains in the EU	% agree: Economic prospects for you and your family will be better if the UK Leaves the EU	% agree: it doesn't makes much difference either way
National leave voters	51.9	5.1	42.7	32.2
Boston and Skegness	74.9	2.7	46.3	31.7
Walsall North	74.2	3.5	45.4	29.8
South Basildon and Eat Thurrock	73	3.4	44.8	31.0
Castle Point	72.7	2.7	46.4	32.5
Kingston-upon-Hull East	72.6	4.4	44.3	29.7

an initial shock as the result of the referendum became clear. Confidence among these groups plummeted after the result. Although this change in optimism and pessimism had settled by July 2017, overall optimism for confident multiculturals fell by five percent (5%) over 18 months, a trend which was echoed in respect to people's own selves and families as well as Britain as a whole.

Two years on, July 2018 YouGov poll found that this trend had become more engrained as the Brexit negotiations go on. Remain voters were far more pessimistic about the future than Leave voters. Seventy-one percent (71%) of Remain voters said they felt pessimistic for the future, more than twice the proportion of Leave voters (35%). Eighteen percent (18%) of Remain voters felt that the next generation would have more opportunities than us, compared to 53% of Leave voters. Forty-six percent (46%) of Leave voters felt that Brexit would increase the economic opportunities for people like themselves, compared to just seven percent (7%) of Remain voters.

Nearly two-thirds (64.3%) of Remain voters felt that the economic prospects for themselves and their family would be better if the UK remained in the EU, compared to a tiny 5.1% of Leave voters. Instead, 42.7% of Leave voters felt optimistic that their personal

economic situation would improve if the UK left the EU, while 32.2% felt it wouldn't make much difference either way. Messages about the potentially detrimental economic impacts of Brexit just did not resonate with those feeling a newfound optimism as a result of the referendum result. Focaldata's constituency estimates reveal that pessimism about Brexit is not equally spread across the country.

Focus groups we have run as part of our campaign against a hard Brexit and through the National Conversation on immigration echo these findings. Those holding the strongest Leave views are often least likely to be concerned about potential economic crashes following Britain's exit from the EU, remaining instead hopeful that leaving the EU will bring greater prosperity to the county and to them and their families. As a woman in Grimsby told us:

"It can't get any worse, so...Putting the Great back in Great Britain, they're changing the passports to blue, aren't they? How they used to be before we went into the EU, so if that's happening then, we can go back to Great Britain surely."

The table (Figure 3: Leave voters in the top 5 Leave voting constituencies) looks at how Leave voters in the five constituencies with the strongest 2016 Leave vote feel about their personal economic prospects.

The levels of optimism about economic prosperity are greatest in those areas that voted most strongly to leave the EU, with just 2.7% of Leave voters in Boston and Skegness and in Castle Point feeling that their economic prospects would improve if Britain did not leave the EU.

Our MRP constituency data also shows that areas with the greatest fall in optimism for the future between February 2016 and July 2018 are among the areas with the greatest Remain vote in the referendum. Hornsey and Wood Green became 23% more pessimistic over two years, Bristol West 22.3% more pessimistic, and Islington North 21.8% more pessimistic than in the months before the referendum.

Conversely, Leave voting areas saw a surge in optimism. Boston and Skegness, the constituency with the strongest Leave vote in the referendum was 15% more optimistic in our July 2018 poll, with other Brexit strongholds such as Clacton (14.6%), Castle Point (12.4%) and Louth and Horncastle (12.4%) all more optimistic for the future than in February 2016.

This shift in optimism and pessimism is substantial. The maps on page 21 show how areas of the country which in 2016 were most optimistic (red) have now become some of the most pessimistic (yellow), while areas which were once pessimistic (yellow) now

stand out as majoritively optimistic (red).

As these maps, and the graph below shows, the shifting mood in the country cements the divisions exposed by the Brexit vote. Constituencies with the strongest Leave vote share a newfound optimism, while those which most strongly voted to remain in the EU follow an opposite trend.

This crossing line in optimism and pessimism between Leave and Remain matters, because many of the places experiencing newfound optimism are among those most likely to feel the impacts of predicted economic downturn after the UK leaves the EU.

Economic projections² suggest that the cost of a hard Brexit could be as high as an 18% drop in long-term output, but that the impacts of a hard Brexit will affect those living in our poorest regions most. Predictions suggest that it is manufacturing and areas most dependent on EU trade, from Cumbria through Blackburn and Burnley, Hull and Grimsby, Leicester and Northants to Swindon, which will feel the greatest impacts.

According to the government's own forecasts, the impact of Brexit will fall most heavily on the North East. This region is predicted to shrink four times as much as London in the event of a hard Brexit, and three times as much as London for a softer scenario. The North West and >>

Figure 4: 20 constituencies with the greatest change in optimism: February 2016– July 2018

Constituency	Leave vote 2016 referendum (%) ²	MRP constituency estimates: change in % of people feeling optimistic for the future February 2016 – July 2018
Boston & Skegness	75.60%	+14.90%
Clacton	73.00%	+14.60%
Castle Point	72.70%	+12.40%
Louth & Horncastle	68.90%	+12.40%
South Holland & The Deepings	71.10%	+12.20%
Basildon South & Thurrock East	73.00%	+10.90%
Cambridgeshire North East	69.40%	+10.80%
Norfolk South West	66.70%	+10.00%
Cleethorpes	69.50%	+9.80%
Great Yarmouth	71.50%	+9.70%
Streatham	20.50%	-19.40%
Dulwich & West Norwood	22.90%	-19.50%
Hackney North & Stoke Newington	20.50%	-19.60%
Edinburgh South	22.20%	-20.30%
Battersea	22.00%	-20.30%
Edinburgh North & Leith	21.80%	-20.80%
Hampstead & Kilburn	23.70%	-21.00%
Islington North	21.60%	-21.80%
Bristol West	20.70%	-22.30%
Hornsey & Wood Green	25.00%	-22.90%

West Midlands are also set to see the greatest impacts, forecast to shrink three times as much as London in a hard Brexit scenario. But again, our MRP constituency estimates show a high degree of newfound optimism across these regions.

For example, in Dudley north. Economic projections suggest that the West Midlands economy could shrink by up to 13% after Britain leaves the EU² which would have a direct negative impact on people living in Dudley, where there are already pockets of acute deprivation. However, just 3.6% of leave voters in Dudley North feel their economic situation would improve if the UK remained in the EU. An area where under 40% of people felt optimistic for the future in February 2016, by July 2018 optimism in the constituency has surged by 8%.

In focus groups we held in areas predicted to be worst hit

by an economic downturn did not believe these predictions, as they believed it was wealthier people in the core cities and London who had more to lose. Many felt that there would be economic downturn immediately after Brexit, but that these impacts would not last, and that in the long run they would be better off. As a woman in Bradford put it in response to economic projections, *"I've not got anything to lose. It'll affect all the people with money"*. And a young woman in Blackpool:

"I'm just a working class student in Blackpool, why would any of this change things for me... now all these things come up on the news, trade and that. But they're making it more complicated because they don't want to leave, these big shots in London are gonna lose the most, not the working class"

However, economic predictions also suggest that the global financial centre

in the City of London will survive. Newfound pessimism in places such as inner London boroughs, Cambridge and Bristol West which are likely to be least affected plays into a perceived division, the order of winners and losers, which some felt Brexit would reverse.

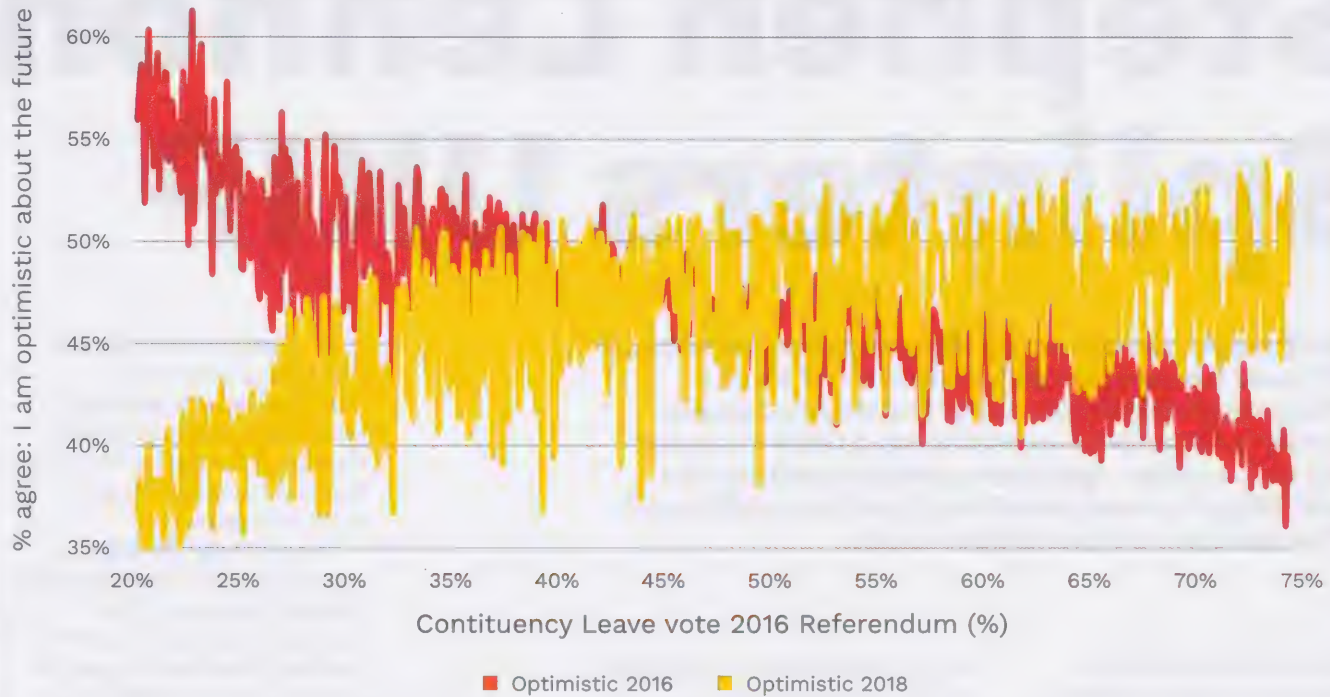
If these economic predictions come to fruition, the bubble of newfound optimism in the poorest areas will burst. Moreover, an economic crash will most likely add to inequality, rather than reverse it. This opens a window of opportunity for populist exploitation.

An anti-establishment sentiment was a driving force, the motive of many to vote to leave the EU. Whatever the outcome of a deal, no deal, or no Brexit at all, whoever is in charge of the Brexit negotiations will be held accountable not only for the economic impacts but also for failing to deliver a reality that

meets optimistic perceptions. This will reflect on all politicians as failing to deliver on their promises. Narratives about the political class as 'traitors', already in circulation, will resonate even more.

Further, our research consistently shows that a sense of loss, economic decline, and economic difficulties, are key driving forces for fear and hate. We have found that the most negative attitudes to immigration and multiculturalism and hostility towards Muslims emerge where there is high level deprivation, little diversity and geographic and social isolation, all of which enable far right support triggered by local tensions or international events.

Economic downturn can easily be converted into resentment towards other. Immigration was a key driver of the Brexit vote, and our research showed that attitudes to

Figure 5: Change in optimism 2016- 2018 by constituency Leave vote

immigration improved after the referendum, as for many with more negative attitudes there is a belief that Brexit will 'solve the problem'. However,

a worsening in economic conditions with less money available for public services could see concerns about immigration re-emerge.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Constituency Leave votes based on <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/parliament-and-elections/elections-elections/brexit-votes-by-constituency/>
- 2 <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/rejecting-radical-right-hard-brexite/>

I am optimistic about the future: Feb 2016



I am optimistic about the future: July 2016



Stephen Lennon Splinters UKIP

Nigel Farage and other top figures have abandoned UKIP over Gerard Batten's embrace of street politics and infatuation with Tommy Robinson. The turmoil has both consolidated UKIP's status as an overtly far-right party and opened up the possibility of a new pro-Brexit, radical right party on the horizon. By David Lawrence.

ON 9 DECEMBER 2018, the far-right extremist and serial criminal Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) stood alongside UKIP leader Gerard Batten and told the thousands gathered for the "Brexit Betrayal" rally to join UKIP. Onstage, Lennon even attempted to fill out the membership application form on his phone, encouraging attendees to do the same on the spot.

Despite its billing as a "cross party" demonstration, and the fact that numerous far-right groups were represented at the

march, the event was dominated by UKIP. The march was fronted by a huge UKIP banner, large numbers of "join UKIP" postcards were distributed, and the large majority of the speakers currently hold positions within the party, including disgraced former Tory Neil Hamilton, former UKIP leader Lord Pearson and the prominent UKIP member and online anti-feminist Carl Benjamin (AKA Sargon of Akkad). Whilst UKIP has long been considered a more "mainstream" party than the fascist British National Party

(BNP), extreme rhetoric was prevalent at the event. For example, one attendee bore a sign alleging that the murder of Jo Cox MP was a "false flag", and another carried a makeshift gallows.

The event signified the consolidation of a new, overtly far right version of UKIP. Batten has brought the worst tendencies within his party to the fore, and is willing to use hard-line anti-Muslim and anti-government language and to engage in street politics, to pander to the likes of Lennon and his supporters.

UKIP's rightward trajectory looks certain to continue, as UKIP's former leader Nigel Farage and a host of MEPs have quit the party, ostensibly to protest Batten's infatuation with Lennon and street politics, in doing so removing internal roadblocks for Batten to take the party down an ever-more brazenly extreme route. The trigger was Batten's appointment of the English Defence League (EDL) founder as his "Special Personal Advisor on Rape Gangs and Prison Conditions and Prison Reform". Batten has been unperturbed by the fact that former members of the BNP and EDL are barred from joining, and has been a tireless cheerleader for Lennon and actively pushed for him to be permitted to join UKIP.

After failing to force a vote of no confidence in Batten's leadership, Farage has labelled Batten's UKIP "the new BNP", and called the march "the most ill-judged political event I have ever been aware of in British politics". Farage is now reportedly plotting to launch a new party to push for Brexit in case of a possible second referendum or snap General Election. Farage also told the

Gerard Batten talks with Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson)



Mail Online that “if they suspend Article 50 and we fight in the next European elections, I will be there”. The Mail reports that the new venture could use Leave Means Leave, the Brexit campaign group, as a “launchpad” for the new movement.

Despite Farage’s condemnation of Batten, it is important to recognise that UKIP under his own leadership was no stranger to ugly nativist politics. Farage has longstanding links to far-right organiser Steve Bannon and his sidekick Raheem Kassam, who respectively supported and organised the “Free Tommy” demonstrations over the summer during Lennon’s most recent stint behind bars. Farage has supported a number of European far-right leaders, such as Marine Le Pen of the French National Front, and has also been photographed enjoying a boozy lunch with Lennon’s close associates. Farage seems to object as much to the tactics and appearance of Lennon and his supporters (who he has labelled “skinheads and people with tattoos to the eyeballs”), as their politics. His distancing from Lennon and Batten is in part strategic, presenting himself as a voice of moderation despite associating with other anti-Muslim activists.

As to the likelihood of this new venture, it is important to recognise that there have been numerous previous hints of a new radical right Brexit party since the 2016 EU Referendum, primarily from Farage’s close ally Arron Banks, all of which have, as of yet, failed to manifest. The perfect moment for launching a new party seems to have come and gone; during Henry Bolton’s disastrous stint as leader, whole branches were abandoning the party, which looked certain to implode or go bankrupt. Banks has since faced legal probes into his campaign spending, and in August he urged the supporters of his Leave.EU campaign, in which Farage was once involved, to join the Conservatives. It is also questionable the extent to which Farage, who currently holds a number of comfortable media jobs, actually wants to return to the daily toil of party

politics. However, whilst it is possible that Farage is simply making another headline grab in his bid to stay relevant, many of UKIP’s MEPs quit in a clearly coordinated move, suggesting that the former UKIP members have a serious intention to create a new vehicle.

It is also uncertain what the impact of a new Brexit party would be. Farage himself maintains a degree of visibility beyond that of any other figure associated with UKIP; YouGov currently lists him as both the most popular and the most famous “other UK public figure”. However, it seems unlikely that a new venture would attract many high profile Conservatives, who would be taking a massive gamble in abandoning their long-established party to throw their lot in with Farage. Farage’s celebrity alone may not be enough to sell a new party with unfamiliar branding to voters, especially if it has a short time period in which to gain traction.

Despite UKIP’s far right trappings, it remains a household name across the UK, and Batten remains popular with his base, many of whom believe he saved the party from imminent bankruptcy after taking over in February. Batten has also halted the exodus of the party membership, in part by seeking to recruit directly from the hooligan-led Football Lads Alliance (FLA) and its offshoot the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA), and by courting Lennon’s supporters. Batten has also sought to appeal directly to the fan bases of a set of extreme online figures who joined UKIP in July. These include Benjamin, who has called his opponents “n***ers” and told a female MP “I wouldn’t even rape you”; Paul Joseph Watson, the far-right conspiracy theorist employed by the notorious American fake news outlet InfoWars; Mark Meechan (AKA Count Dankula), a man best known for teaching a pug to perform a Nazi salute on the order “Sieg Heil”; and Milo Yiannopoulos, the near-bankrupt anti-Muslim provocateur known for popularising the “alt-right”. Watson, Meechan and Benjamin have been particularly active in proselytizing for the party, the



Extreme online figures who have joined UKIP (top to bottom) Paul Joseph Watson, Mark Meechan (aka Count Dankula) and Milo Yiannopoulos

membership of which has risen under Batten to roughly 26,000. Whilst this is well down from UKIP’s peak of 46,000 during the 2015 General Election, the party is now swollen with new members who believe Batten’s UKIP represents their views.

The “Brexit Betrayal” march was a highly significant event for UKIP. Whilst it may yet prove to be the trigger event for a new radical right Brexit party helmed by Farage, it certainly signifies UKIP’s plunge into the far-right gutter of politics. It was startling to see Lennon, a far-right extremist, embraced so openly by a party that once had mainstream aspirations. We may yet see UKIP become the apparatus that provides Lennon something he has never had before: real influence through electoral politics. At this stage, the only certainty is that there is a great deal more turmoil on the horizon. ■

TECH SAVVY

How the far right are using technology to spread hate

A SPECIAL 14-PAGE REPORT

Hate

has always existed. The arrival of the World Wide Web and the near ubiquity of social media today has not invented discrimination or prejudice. However, it has revolutionised the means by which hate is spread and discrimination is acted out.

However, as the expression goes, the medium is the message, and this is just as true for the far right. Not only have social media, digital currencies and crowdfunding, encryption and a plethora of other technological developments revolutionised the far right's ability to organise, propagandise, and keep themselves afloat, but in many ways these tools have influenced the far right's attitudes, including towards the role and value of international cooperation and the importance of culture wars to their cause.

Of course, it is important to avoid overly-deterministic interpretations of

technology in politics. Technology is always a tool, a product of human invention which is imbued with the values of its designers and used (or misused) to suit the ends of human actors.

Technological advances which have allowed for ever more watertight anonymity, privacy and security online can be simultaneously a vital tool for persecuted minorities attempting to avoid censorship and hostility from authoritarian regimes, at the same time as a means for those in the far right wishing to organise likewise hostile campaigns or outright violence (often against many of the same persecuted groups).

With new technology comes new opportunities for the far right. Not only do encrypted online messaging services, for example, allow far right actors to evade the law, they are also able to organise themselves, increasingly across borders, to coordinate campaigns that will reach new victims across the globe. With this comes a challenge that, whilst not new for anti-



fascists, is harder now than perhaps it has ever been to combat: the drastic lowering of the social cost of engaging in far-right activity. Where once such activity at so many points exposed individuals – from joining parties and organisations, to attending meetings, handing out leaflets and attending demonstrations – now, with minimal technical expertise and from the anonymity of one's home, someone can organise, support and engage in the dissemination of far-right propaganda and the harassment of minorities (not to mention be radicalised in the first

place, and at an alarming rate through a freely available and worryingly accessible deluge of said propaganda).

At the same time as reducing the cost of activism, technological change has also radically affected its nature. In addition to pushing efforts at affecting culture to the fore – through memes, video content and much else – social media, especially, has altered political organising across the spectrum by reducing the investment individuals need to make into planning events and campaigns. The infrastructure the likes



of Facebook, the voice chat platform Discord and the forum 4chan provide have been leapt upon by the far right and, in a number of ways, far more successfully than by progressive movements on many occasions. The result of this that the primacy of traditional organisational structures – parties and social movements with their necessary bureaucracy – has been undermined. Whilst this “post-organisational” turn may not spell the end for such structures, it has already presented a challenge to them and, as such, a challenge to anti-fascists who are relying on

means which, whatever their previous benefits, may no longer be enough to allow us to fight back against the far right today. No-platforming, for instance, fares less well online insofar as content can simply reappear elsewhere at a moments notice. Moreover, the replication of this tactic online is still premised on the assumption that the platform in question would not ally with the far right, yet given their efforts to create their own, alternative platforms to the likes of Twitter and YouTube, this tactic will be harder and harder to execute in the digital sphere.

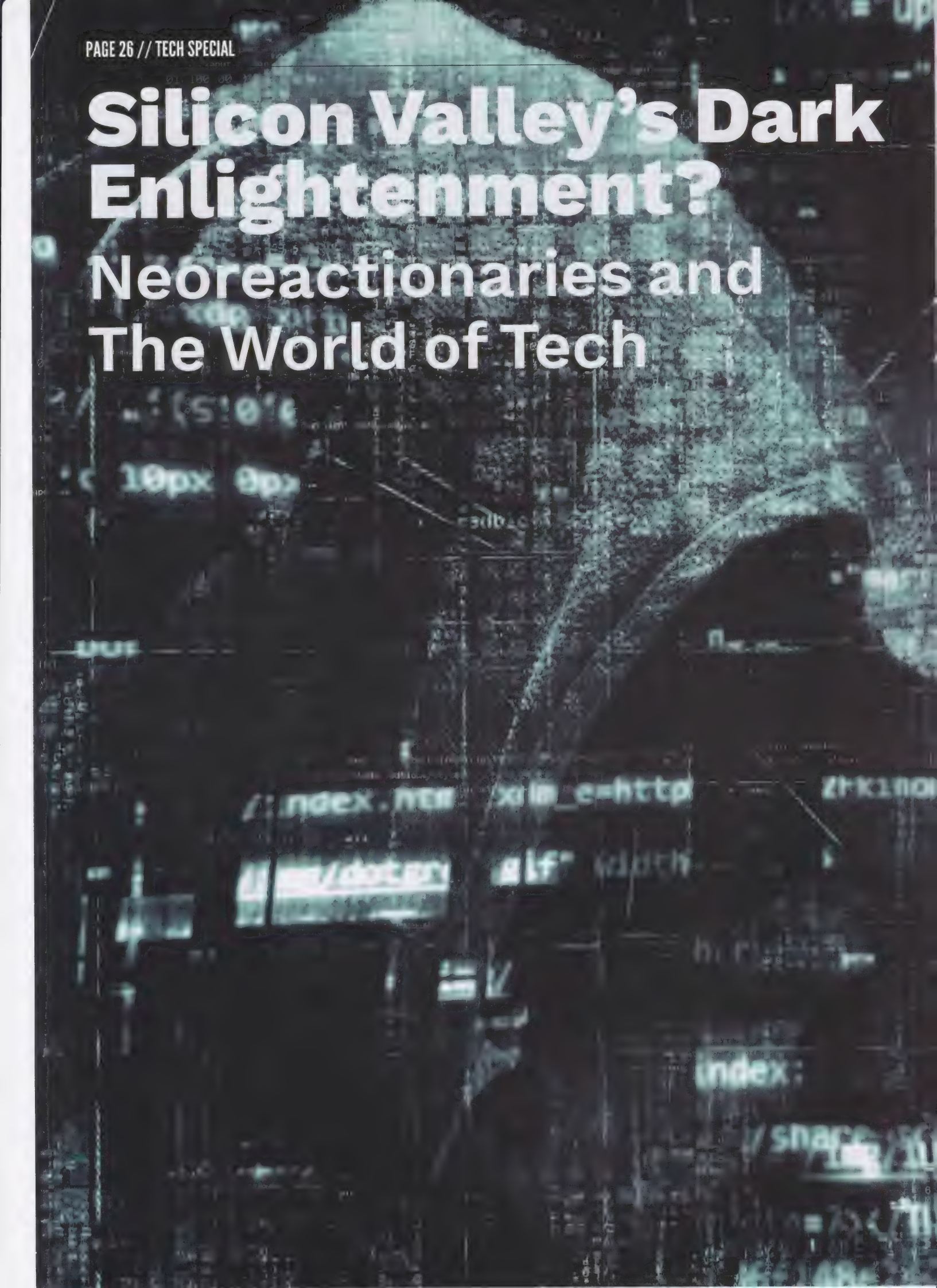
The challenge of reimagining the tools of anti-fascism in response to technological change is exemplified best by the technological horizon which some in the far right are attempting to get a headstart on. Most significantly here is the development of “blockchain” technology, which through a revolutionary means of decentralising control, is being seized on by the far right to not only earn staggering sums through digital currencies (which are protected by powerful encryption), but also to create platforms for

disseminating propaganda which would be incredibly difficult to undermine.

Given these seismic changes, this edition of the *HOPE not hate* magazine aims to cover the way the far right are using technology and how they are thinking about its potential and pitfalls. Moreover, in an in-depth investigation of the far right movement closest to the heart of the tech world today, the “Neoreactionary” movement and Silicon Valley, we examine the question of their influence or at least convergence on this undoubtedly influential arena of modern politics. ■

Silicon Valley's Dark Enlightenment?

Neoreactionaries and The World of Tech



By Simon Murdoch

In the early hours of 9 November 2016, while much of the world watched in disbelief at the election of a candidate wearing bigotry as a badge of electoral credibility, an obscure Silicon Valley computer programmer came to learn that the billionaire tech magnate, with whom he was watching the events unfold, was “fully enlightened”.

The programmer was Curtis Yarvin, aka “Mencius Moldbug”, an erstwhile blogger whose grandiose online musings in the late 2000s on the need to destroy progressive liberal democracy (or, as he liked to refer to it, the “Cathedral”) would play a role in the development of the white nationalist alt-right.

The billionaire was Peter Thiel, a tech entrepreneur and venture capitalist who declared, in 2009, that he “no longer believe[d] freedom and democracy [were] compatible”, who has expressed his interest in “parabiosis” – a supposed means of forestalling ageing by injecting the blood of the young – and who has invested in 477 acres of New Zealand land, seemingly to jet off to in the case of an apocalyptic collapse of American society.

But what, in the San Franciscan mansion, of a man who reportedly aided the President Elect’s vetting of new staff to the federal government did Yarvin conclude that Thiel was enlightened about exactly?

PROGRAMMERS FOR PATCHWORK

Commentators have speculated a great deal about rumblings of far right support under the surface of Silicon Valley’s saccharine liberal veneer.

This is not without some basis. For example, *Mother Jones’* Josh Harkinson reported in 2017 that Andrew Anglin, of the nazi website *The Daily Stormer*, had told him that “Santa Clara County, home to Apple and Intel, is his site’s largest traffic source”.

Of course, it is important to maintain healthy scepticism about such claims by the far right because it is in its interest to inflate its size and influence. Few of these speculations have been accompanied by investigations of what exactly could lie at their roots.

The contingent of the contemporary far right that has gained particular association with Silicon Valley – and the tech community more broadly – is the “Neoreactionary” or “NRx” subculture.

This refers to a largely online, far right political grouping that has taken shape since 2000 and has played a role in the development of the white nationalist alt-right.

Emerging from a wider, largely apolitical, science and technology blogging community, Curtis Yarvin would publish a series of sprawling posts around which the NRx coalesced. These (neo)reactionary bloggers saw that their views – be they on gender, race, religion, governance and much else – overlapped when it came to rejecting the progressive, liberal democratic consensus on these topics that has grown in the West following the Enlightenment.

As Yarvin’s output dwindled in the early-to-mid-2010s, the spread of his writing was catalysed thanks to the blogging of Nick Land, a former philosophy professor known in part for developing ideas in the 1990s around “accelerationism” that became popular with some on the left.

In more recent times, Land’s politics have veered to the far right. Writing for *Viewpoint Magazine* in 2017, US writer Shuja Haider described how, in 2012, Land “took it upon himself to systematize the Moldbug ideology, and [...] christened it “The Dark Enlightenment.”

His series of essays setting out the principles of NRx have become fundamental to its canon. In addition to the term “Dark Enlightenment” catching on, Haider highlights that Land’s essays were useful precisely because, quoting early-NRx figure Michael Anissimov from his *MoreRight* blog in September 2013, “Very few of Moldbug’s fans have read anywhere near his entire corpus”.

Yet it does not take much familiarity with this corpus and its fans to see that they reserve most of their vitriol for democracy *per se*. In place of democratic nation states, they propose what they call “neocameralism”.

According to Land: “*Neocameralism*

could be understood as “corporatist” and “dictatorial”. It treats the state as a corporation, founded upon freely alienable primary or sovereign property. It is “dictatorial” in the manner of all corporate control (i.e. run by stock-holders, not enfranchised customers, or by employees).”

He offers Hong Kong and Singapore as “approximate templates” for “neocameralism”. However, these competing states are not uniform in nature but rather a “patchwork” of competing states with differing ideological models.

Land claims “regime heterogeneity” is the preferred model, stating “If leftists have nowhere to go, the outcome will be suboptimal.” In this model, where individuals choose amongst competing states as they do their utilities supplier or bank, elections are deemed superfluous as productive and effective governments would self-legitimise or fail on the merits of their actions just as a company does.

While there will supposedly be place for left-wing governance in this future patchwork of competing “neocameral”

states, NRx supporters often envisage their utopian option as being a racist ethnostate or believe Yarvin’s neocameralism to offer the chance for a competition-driven ethnopluralist future.

As the US writer Park MacDougald has noted, “All neoreactionaries reject “progressivism,” by which they mean democracy, egalitarianism, and a belief in more or less linear historical progress and even the non-white-supremacists tend towards a hereditarian determinism that bleeds easily into outright racism.”

A MATTER OF CONVERGENCE?

How then should the relationship between this niche far right ideology and the world of ostensibly liberal Big Tech be understood?

A likely explanation is that, for the most part, any overlap is a product of ideological convergence, resulting from a pre-existing libertarianism prevalent within the tech community. As Klint Finley wrote for *Techcrunch* in 2013, though NRx is “a

CRYPTOCURRENCIES

Cryptocurrencies are entirely digital currencies. There are many hundreds of cryptocurrencies, including Ethereum, XRP, Bitcoin Cash and EOS but by far the most popular and successful is Bitcoin, developed in 2008 by the pseudonymous Satoshi Nakamoto.

Sections of the far right have long been interested in cryptocurrencies, in particular the more tech-savvy contingent of the alt-right due to the lack of regulation and legal oversight and level of anonymity afforded.

Bitcoin transactions do not rely on any form of identification except for a cryptographic key and are often made behind the anonymity of the Tor network in order to make it even harder to determine the source of the transaction.

Cryptocurrencies also afford potential for huge financial gains because of the skyrocketing price of Bitcoin in the autumn and winter of 2017 and 2018.

There is also an ideological component. As David Golumbia of Virginia Commonwealth University explains: “Bitcoin and its blockchain technology subscribe to a form of cyberlibertarianism that depends to a surprising extent on far right political thought”.

The nazi Daily Stormer site has described cryptocurrency as a potential means to “free us from the Jew-dominated central banking institutions”. Alt-right figurehead Richard Spencer claimed in March 2017 that “Bitcoin is the currency of the alt-right”.

The outlawed British nazi group National Action was recommending its followers to use Bitcoin in 2015 as “it is a great way to help protect your identity when making purchases”. Interest in cryptocurrencies on the far right has also increased after online payment providers such as Stripe and PayPal cancelled contracts with high-profile websites and activists.

HOPE not hate investigations have revealed that a number of far right activists have made enormous amounts of money on the back of the Bitcoin boom. Stefan Molyneux, for example, withdrew \$1,350,816 from his Bitcoin wallet between February 2013 and January 2018. As of August 2018, Andrew Auernheimer (aka weev) of the Daily Stormer has added the equivalent of a staggering \$1,676,039 to his Bitcoin wallet.



small, minority world view” within tech culture, it’s one that “shines some light on [its] psyche”.

The clearest connection to this psyche – and indeed the NRx community – is Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal, an early Facebook investor and a co-founder of, among numerous other organisations, Palantir, a data analytics company used for US government surveillance.

Thiel has been the focal point of speculation about NRx/Silicon Valley links for two reasons. Firstly, his political positions have appeared to align at times with those of the NRx community, both in his criticisms of progressive politics and, more significantly, in his view that companies should be run in a manner that stops short of outright dictatorship.

In 2012, Thiel gave a series of lectures to students at Stanford University and Blake Masters, who attended the lectures and who went on to work for Thiel, published his notes online, paraphrasing Thiel as follows: “A startup is basically

WHAT IS THE DARK WEB?

World Wide Web

...the part of the internet which is publicly accessible and can be reached by standard web browsers and search engines.

Deep Web

Over 90% of the information on the internet is in the deep web and is not accessible by surface web crawlers. However, it doesn't mean that they're dark web areas – they're just one layer removed from the public web that's searchable through search engines.

Dark Web

The dark web consists of websites that use public internet, but require specific software for access and is not indexed by search engines to ensure anonymity. The stolen data is traded, sold and used for financial, political or personal gain.

DARK WEB

The "dark web" is a part of the World Wide Web that is accessible only via specific software that allows users to operate, browse and engage online completely anonymously and untraceably.

The majority of websites on the dark web are invisible to regular search engines and browsers and can only be accessed by using an encryption service called the Tor Project – which was initially developed with funding from the US government – although some use other services such as I2P.

Such services hide the IP address of the site's server, as well as the user, by routing the connection via multiple servers in its network (using Tor to visit sites on the surface web is also a way to anonymise the user and circumvent censorship).

Because of the difficulty of determining the IP address and thereby location of a site's server, websites on the dark web are thus very hard to censor. It has made the dark web attractive for those engaged in black markets selling illicit materials such as drugs, weapons, child pornography and offering hitmen. It has also provided cover for those wishing to leak information anonymously or for activists in countries where internet access is monitored or limited.

Some extreme sites, such as the stalker/harassment forum Kiwifarms, operate on the surface web but also have an additional Tor address for those desiring anonymity.

The option of anonymity and the ability to circumvent censorship has made the dark web very attractive to far right extremists hoping to avoid potential leaks or legal consequences.

A 2015 document released by the British nazi group National Action – now outlawed under terrorist legislation – provided advice on how to use Tor, warning against the "sneaky little Jews" of Google who "keep your records of everything to make more money and to appeal to their overlords".

The dark web also provides refuge for far right websites when they have been subjected to censorship measures. For example, the nazi Daily Stormer site found sanctuary on Tor after it was denied registration from Google and GoDaddy and booted off multiple domain names following the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017.

Despite the Daily Stormer being on the surface web since February 2018 (with a ".name" address), the site's fora still operate on the dark web.



structured as a monarchy. We don't call it that, of course [...] anything that's not democracy makes people uncomfortable. [...] [But] Importantly, it isn't an absolute dictatorship. [...] pure dictatorship is unideal because you can't attract anyone to come work for you. [...] So the best arrangement is a quasi-mythological structure where you have a king-like founder who can do more than in a democratic ruler [sic] but who remains far from all-powerful."

Thiel is talking specifically about startups but the parallels with the NRx community's preferred form of neocameralist governance discussed above are substantial, something that does not appear lost on him.

In 2011, Stanford Law School's Mark Lemley interviewed Thiel after the entrepreneur taught a class at the university on the theme of "sovereignty, globalisation and technological change" (a class he reprised in 2018). Lemley notes that one of the questions discussed in the class was: "Is there something

analogous to starting a company and starting a country?"

The second reason Thiel has attracted so much attention is that he has been a serious investor in experiments in this simultaneously pro/anti-libertarian picture of ideal governance and in organisations with direct ties to the NRx community.

Most significant is his venture capital firm's investment in Tlon, a company founded by Yarvin in 2013. Tlon focuses on an internet decentralising project called Urbit that Yarvin has been developing since 2002, the aim of which is to remove control of web services from major tech companies.

Another direct link comes through Thiel's investment in the Seasteading Institute, an organisation that aims to build floating cities in the sea and that was founded by Patri Friedman, grandson of the influential libertarian Milton Friedman. "Seasteading" is seen by some in the NRx community as a means of escaping liberal

democratic states and implementing neocameralism, though it has enjoyed support otherwise within Silicon Valley.

In a January 2014 Facebook post, Patri Friedman stated that he was happy to discover "that Mencius is no longer an obscure single voice but has somehow managed to inspire an entire school of red pill political philosophy".

He added, however, that he was hoping to create "a more politically correct dark enlightenment [sic] [...] adding anti-racism and anti-sexism".

Beyond these ties to NRx-inflected experiments, Thiel was linked to the NRx figure Michael Anissimov by way of the Machine Intelligence Research Institute (MIRI) where Anissimov worked from 2004 until 2013.

Anissimov would go on to leave MIRI and self-publish a book in 2015 that argued multiculturalism had "made it difficult for intelligent Europeans to thrive in the United States". An artificial intelligence research organisation, MIRI was founded in 2000 and Thiel was one

of its earliest and largest donors.

The extent of Thiel's ideological overlaps with NRx thinking more broadly are evident from his criticisms of progressive politics. Most notably, he co-wrote *The Diversity Myth: Multiculturalism and Political Intolerance on Campus* in 1996 that criticised multicultural policies in universities and called date rape "belated regret".

In October 2016, he apologised for the book's "insensitive, crudely argued statements" in a statement to *Forbes*, adding that "Rape in all forms is a crime". But, as *Forbes* noted, Thiel did not say which specific statements were "crudely argued" nor did he explicitly denounce his criticism of multicultural policies in education.

Thiel also founded the student paper, *The Stanford Review*, while a student at the same university in 1987, that argued that Stanford "should focus on 'institutionalized liberalism' rather than [its] supposed 'institutionalized racism'".

Stanford Politics' Andrew Granato reported that, during the after-party for the 30th anniversary of the *Review*, held at Thiel's home, a former editor of the student paper was told by Thiel that "his apology was just for the media, and that 'sometimes you have to tell them what they want to hear.'"

Granato also reported that Thiel had told a former editor at the event that Yarvin was "interesting" but "crazy", and he would "lecture you for an hour". He adds that "the editor remembered that Thiel did offer to set up a meeting between Yarvin and [a current] *Review* staff member who asked about him".

Thiel's ideological roots are libertarian and it appears that it is from this direction that his critique of multiculturalism in education – specifically the claim that it undermines intellectual rigour – arises. As he told vlogger Dave Rubin on his *Rubin Report* YouTube show in September 2018: "*Diversity of ideas is to be valued, but you don't have real diversity when you have people who look different and think alike [...] The diversity myth is that it's not about diversity at all. It's about conformity.*"

Of course, under the guise of protecting a "diversity of ideas", it is possible for extreme positions to be given an equal platform. Thiel ventured into this territory in 2016 after it was revealed that he was due to speak at the annual meeting of the Property and Freedom Society (PFS) in Turkey.

The PFS was founded in 2006 by Hans-Hermann Hoppe, an influential right-wing libertarian academic who, in a speech to the PFS in 2017 on

BLOCKCHAIN

A blockchain is an open, distributed and decentralised ledger that records transactions between parties in a verifiable and permanent way. It is best known as the technology behind cryptocurrency transactions. Information is gathered into "blocks" which are then linked using cryptography and generally distributed by a peer-to-peer network.

The database of this chain is decentralised with complete copies sitting on multiple servers, all of which must validate an exchange before it can be verified and recorded.

Because it sits on several servers and makes constant checks, the database is practically impossible to change, other than being added to. This means that, in the case of Bitcoin, there is an unchangeable record of all transactions ever made which assures security and makes it difficult for any authority to seize assets, for example.

While best known for Bitcoin, blockchain technology has a whole host of other applications. Blockchain platforms have emerged online that use decentralised peer-to-peer networks so as to avoid centralised administrators censoring content.

One such example is the InterPlanetary File System which uses blockchain technology to create ways to make files and websites very difficult to censor.



"Libertarianism and the Alt-Right", declared that "restrictive, highly selective and discriminating immigration [...] is entirely compatible with libertarianism and its *desideratum* of freedom of association and opposition to forced integration".

Thiel's name was removed from the list of speakers after it was announced that he was due to speak and a spokesperson stated that he would not be attending the event. Nonetheless, that Thiel was down to speak at meeting of a society that had previously hosted far right thinkers like Peter Brimelow, John Derbyshire, Tomislav Sunic, Jared Taylor, Richard Spencer and Paul Gottfried is worrying.

FERTILE GROUND

That well-known figures like Thiel could come into contact with fringe ideas like NRx is less bizarre when one takes into account the history of the San Francisco Bay Area where Silicon Valley is situated.

As Julia Galef, a co-founder of the Center for Applied Rationality (CFAR), which has ties to the aforementioned MIRI, explained in a post to the Less Wrong blog in September 2013: "The Bay Area is unusually dense with idea-driven subcultures that mix and cross-pollinate in fascinating ways, many of which are already enriching rationalist culture".

Prior to his personal blogging, Yarvin had already been a contributor to the preexisting and occasionally overlapping "rationalist" community to which Galef refers, sometimes referred to in its online manifestation as the "Rationalist Sphere".

This community of bloggers is concerned with various topics but centres around a deep interest in

rationality, cognitive science and technology and has been associated with such blogs as Overcoming Bias, Slate Star Codex and the above-mentioned Less Wrong.

Despite this, NRx seems to remain largely at arm's length from most in Silicon Valley, appearing to be known of by elements of the latter and sometimes an ideology of interest to them and so is tolerated if not accepted.

Yarvin, for example, was disinvited from the 2009 Seasteading Institute annual conference after complaints from a fellow invited speaker about the content of his blog though, in a statement, the Institute cited the "gratuitous personal attacks" made by Yarvin towards a speaker as the basis of the disinvitation rather than his extreme writing.

Indeed, it writes with regret that there "are so few political theorists on competitive government that we must admit to some sadness at such a conflict manifesting".

Aside from open support for Urbit, Yarvin's acceptance by Silicon Valley remains somewhat ambiguous. Tweeting in January 2018, Thiel associate Eric Weinstein, who coined the phrase "Intellectual Dark Web" in 2018 to describe a network of high-profile, contrarian right-wing and libertarian figures in the public eye, said that he and Yarvin "ran into each other at a dinner" and joked about their respective movement's names.

Given the role the Rationalist community played in creating NRx, greater insight into this ambiguous relationship is revealed by the annual



(left) Peter Thiel. (top right) technology blogger Curtis Yarvin. (bottom right) Nick Land being interviewed on Red Ice TV

surveys the Less Wrong blog has carried out on its visitors.

In 2009, two years after Yarvin had begun blogging, the survey did not provide much insight into this nascent far right community, specifying only that “conservatives” were a minority of 6/166 respondents.

Yet, by 2011, respondents to the survey were curious to know whether any in the community were influenced by Yarvin. In 2012, there was much greater clarity, with 30/1195 respondents claiming to be “Reactionary” and nineteen specifically identifying as “Moldbuggian”.

The following year, 40/1636 respondents were “Reactionary” and, in 2014, 29/1503 identified as “Neoreactionary”.

From the 2016 survey, which appears to be the most recent at the time of writing, just 28/3060 identified as

“Neoreactionary”. Nonetheless, 112 respondents claimed that the site was “Too tolerant of Neoreaction”.

What is evident from these surveys is that the NRx community, insofar as it overlaps with Silicon Valley and the tech world beyond (almost a third of the 2016 respondents worked in academic or practical computing occupations), has been and remains a somewhat tolerated fringe contingent.

What may have allowed it to remain so is precisely that enough NRx adherents – at least in its early stages – were part of the tech community already. Moreover, away from the apocalyptic libertarianism of NRx that might attract the likes of Thiel, many of Silicon Valley’s moderate libertarians and liberal-left share with much of the NRx community a deep conviction about technology’s capacity to act as

a panacea for society’s ills, a belief in radical alternatives to the current political system, and a commitment to an acutely rationalist worldview.

Where they differ, of course, is with regard to what they want society to become. In contrast to the reactionary, “Dark” enlightenment encouraged by the likes of Yarvin, the liberal tech-utopians of Silicon Valley see themselves – however sometimes inaccurately – as *continuing* many Enlightenment ideals.

As Eliezer Yudkowsky, founder of the aforementioned Less Wrong blog, told *Harpers* magazine in 2015: “We’re part of the continuation of the Enlightenment, the Old Enlightenment. This is the New Enlightenment,” he said. “Old project’s finished. We actually have science now, now we have the next part of the Enlightenment project.” ■

Online activism and the Alternative Right

By Patrik Hermansson

THE PRIMARILY ONLINE-BASED far right movement, the Alternative Right, marks itself out from earlier far right groups in how it has made use of online platforms.

While the traditional far right has, of course, used the internet as one tool among many, for the Alternative Right its online presence and influence on online communication is its main weapon.

Both engagement in its interests, as well as in-movement communication, take place online. A variety of platforms play the role of recruitment and radicalisation pathways, function as organisational forums and are used to disseminate its ideas as well as being arenas for its “direct action”, often in the form of attacks on its enemies and “trolling”.

On social media, the Alternative Right has run harassment campaigns against countless individuals and organisations, orchestrated widespread disinformation and attempted to influence elections and the agenda of mainstream media channels.

The Alternative Right's attempts at employing traditional social movement tactics, such as demonstrations, have been considerably less successful, attracting small crowds that are far from the numbers that would have been expected from a movement that claims credit for the election of a US president.

Moreover, they often result in a negative backlash in the form of condemnation in media coverage and from supporters who are embarrassed at the movement's failure to lure meaningful numbers. These demonstrations have also been met repeatedly with legal actions against activists and the exposure of participants by anti-fascists.

The Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, is probably the clearest example of how the movement's ability to mobilise and attract attention online ultimately only translated to a few hundred activists on the ground.

For a white nationalist movement, this is still a meaningful number but it was not the *tour de force* that its supporters wanted or bragged about.

Clearly, there is a marked asymmetry in the movement's ability to act online and offline. Its ability to organise and achieve what it considers successful outcomes online are vastly stronger.

The prevalent assumption has been that a prominent contingent of the Alternative Right is highly skilled at social media and online technology in general and that this explains a large part of the movement's success in this arena.

The movement is often described

as “tech savvy” and its abilities have sometimes been described as far above the average with its members capable of creating “botnets” – where many social media accounts under the control of a single participant or automated software are used to stage large campaigns and actions – and employing similar technically advanced tools and tactics.

This can easily seem like a full explanation for its success online – and lack thereof offline – all the more so given it would hardly be a surprise that a movement's strengths lie in its comfort zone.

Yet, there are risks in attributing



Charlottesville Unite the Right Rally, August 12, 2017. Photo: Rodney Dunning

d the

too much to this single factor as it can overshadow other factors that have played a role in the rise of the Alternative Right.

Ultimately, this outlook views its successes (and failures) in a de-contextualised and atomised way that overlooks the role of web platforms themselves and broader social norms and trends.

It is important to look at the context in which the Alternative Right has achieved its successes (primarily on social media platforms) and at what sets these apart from the ones where it has failed (primarily street protests).



However, first it is important to answer the basic question of what the general aim of the movement's actions is, what it counts as "success" and what it does to achieve it.

The Alternative Right is a movement that primarily aims to influence cultural values in order to effect long-term political change.

"Politics is downstream from culture" is an oft-quoted remark from Andrew Breitbart, co-founder of the Alternative Right media platform that bears his last name.

Many of its tools for effecting cultural change are drawn from an altogether different idea: trolling. This can be defined as being deliberately offensive or provocative online with the aim provoking outrage.

The Alternative Right has inherited and developed this attitude from the antagonistic communities online that parts of the movement emerged from, such as the notorious forum 4chan, and it is entwined in their efforts to harass others and manipulate the media.

These two ideas are both dependent on attention. The Alternative Right aims to reach as many eyes and ears as possible to shift culture and values. Be it attempts directly to influence electoral outcomes or spread its ideas via YouTube videos, the Alternative Right's success is dependent on grabbing attention.

ATTENTION AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

There is no doubt that the internet has elements that have proven useful to the far right just like they have for some progressive social movements.

Far right groups realised the potential of the internet over a decade before the rise of the Alternative Right. Online platforms afford them a degree of anonymity they could not have had offline, which decreases the risk of engagement and makes it easier to express ideas that are socially stigmatised.

The internet allows activists to connect with each other globally and, thereby,

expand their supporter base without concern for borders.

Additionally, modern social media platforms enable activists to gain deep insights into the efficacy of their campaigns by using these platforms' built-in tools as well as third-party tools made for advertisers.

This allows malicious elements online to quickly repeat steps in their disinformation campaigns, find the most efficient approach and learn for the future.

However, certain aspects of social media platforms are particularly well adapted for the goals of the modern far right. As the free-to-use model has been established as the norm, advertising is the main source of income for all the large social media networks.

Advertising revenue in turn depends on the amount of time users spend on the platform. Social media platforms and the Alternative Right measure their success and the amount of attention they garner in a similar way.

EXPLOITING ONLINE PLATFORMS

Social media platforms implement a range of features aimed at making users stay on their sites from giving positive feedback via "likes" to recommendation algorithms that keep users' interest levels up, to detailed measurements of reach for those publishing content and incentives to contribute more content to the platform. Many of these features are easily exploited by the alt-right. The tools are already there. All that needs to be done is to use them.

A report by the research institute Data & Society argues that while Alternative Right social media figures are comparable with ordinary influencers, they "use the techniques of online influencer culture not only to gain trust with their audiences but also explicitly to promote reactionary ideology".

These activists employ tactics such as "search engine optimisation" (techniques to make search engines favour a web page) and react to current events and manufacture controversies



(clockwise from top left) Stefan Molyneux, Colin Robertson (aka Millennial Woes), Lauren Southern and Andy Warski.

such that they are favoured by recommendation algorithms. Examples include far right figures like Stefan Molyneux, Colin Robertson (*aka* Millennial Woes), Lauren Southern and Andy Warski.

More worrying, however, is the Alternative Right's exploitation of social media platforms in ways that their creators never intended. Often these are the types of actions that are penalised by platforms if discovered. What unites these strategies is an effort to assert a level of influence disproportionate to the number of activists behind the actions. This is done in a variety of ways.

SOCKPUPPETS

Sockpuppets are one of the most simple and efficient tactics used by those seeking to manipulate social media conversation.

Sockpuppets are accounts created to deceive others on a platform that they are a genuine user when they are, in fact, just one of multiple fake accounts run by the same person in order to inflame conflict and debate.

It is often done to start a comment thread or inject a conversation with conflict so as to make it seem more interesting and lively as a way to attract authentic users' attention.

Additionally, it is commonly used as a way to inflate the apparent size of a group or campaign to make it more likely to start trending and attract media attention.

The use of sockpuppets is well documented. A key early rallying point for the Alternative Right, known as

"Gamergate" – a campaign to protect gaming as a male space against the perceived encroachment of feminism – was in part driven by the help of sockpuppets and other manipulation tactics. This was indicated by comment threads and chat groups as well as the characteristics of accounts using hashtags associated with Gamergate.

Leaked documents from a German chatroom associated with the far right "Identitarian" movement have provided detailed insight into how the tactic is employed in practice.

One of the documents includes detailed step-by-step instructions on how to make sockpuppets and how to deploy them efficiently.

By making use of specific browser extensions, the writer claimed to run up to 100 YouTube accounts and details the potential use of fake accounts on YouTube.

STRATEGIC AMPLIFICATION AND FAKE NEWS

Disinformation in the form of complete fabrications, rumours or heavily-skewed news items based on actual events is another common tactic employed by the Alternative Right.

Social media platforms are well suited to the spread of fabricated stories because of the difficulty of ascertaining the origin of content. Moreover, even if a source is found, to verify the intent behind its creation and dissemination, as well as the validity of the information itself, can still prove difficult.

The speed of social media further means that, by the time fabrications can be debunked, they can very well have

reached thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people.

The spreading of fake news often relies on strategic amplification. Using the power of a social network and other amplification techniques, manipulators can push a story to a specific mainstream media outlet or in a specific region and hope that, if it takes hold there, it can then travel "up the chain" of successively larger media outlets, following those that are willing to trust a somewhat smaller outlet. (The fringe alternative news site The Gateway Pundit is, for example, often cited by Fox News.)

An item might be posted on an image board such as 4Chan where barriers of entry are low or non-existent and from which other users can pick it up and share it on mainstream social media platforms.

CONTEXTUALISING ATTENTION HACKING

Just as there is a danger in attributing the Alternative Right's efficacy simply to the competence of its supporter base, it is equally dangerous to take a singularly technological determinist perspective.

Whilst it is vital to understand how exactly these technologies are exploited by the far right, understanding the external factors which make people motivated to take part in, and susceptible to, such exploitation is also important.

Without considering this, we may also run the risk of both exaggerating the far right's power to control the course of events when it comes to technological exploitation as well as not sufficiently apportioning blame to groups that otherwise appear innocent.

A now well studied example of this is the influence campaign on social media platforms in the 2016 US Presidential election.

While the idea of a foreign power having the capabilities of influencing national elections is worrying, it might be more convenient to attribute blame to another country's government than to admit that the campaign tapped into existing anxieties, including racial anxieties, and the existence of historical and systemic racism in the US.

There are also multiple actions that current platforms can take to minimise the potential impact of influence campaigns online.

Among other things, one could question the need to divulge masses of information about users, and to users, on the performance of their content on the platforms. However, no solution is likely to solve these problems completely. Fixes need to be multiple and take into account the psychology of users, the variety of platforms and the role of wider social trends and norms. ■

Alt-tech: Far right safe spaces online

The alt-right-affiliated and nazi website the Daily Stormer calls itself “The Most Censored Publication in History”. While this is self-evidently exaggerated, it has faced significant opposition, writes Patrik Hermansson

THE DAILY STORMER website's domain name was seized by Google and its hosting provider, GoDaddy, kicked the site off its servers after the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017.

The site has subsequently moved between hosting providers and has had 14 domain names seized, effectively limiting its access to one of the most basic infrastructure services that makes up the internet.

The Daily Stormer is not the only example of de-platforming moves carried out against alt-right-affiliated figures and organisations.

Chuck Johnson was one of the first high profile alt-right figures to be permanently banned from Twitter after he made violent threats to civil rights activist DeRay Mckesson in May 2015. In 2017, after the events in Charlottesville, Twitter banned large numbers of accounts and revised its policies on hate speech.

The bans have limited parts of the movement's ability to reach its audience in the same way as before and made certain figures less relevant.

While the origin of the alt-right has accurately been assigned to the blogosphere and image boards such as 4chan, mainstream social media platforms are essential for the movement's mainstream recognition



(left) Pax Dickinson who launch Counter.Fund in June 2017 with Chuck Johnson, one of the first high profile alt-right figures to be permanently banned from Twitter

and continue to be the way it disseminates information, attracts new supporters, as well as acting as the key arena on which it conducts its activism.

Considering that one of the most important tactics of the alt-right is trolling and the use of coordinated hate campaigns as a way of attracting the mainstream media's attention in order to inflate its influence and normalize its ideas, denial of this attention can be an effective way to combat it.

However, the lack of a consistent approach between platforms has made the effect weaker than it could

have been. At the time of writing, the influential video blogger Millennial Woes is banned from Twitter but not YouTube and Facebook has banned Richard Spencer and Counter-Currents while Twitter has not.

Despite these shortcomings, the alt-right has increasingly found that the internet is no longer the safe haven it once was. Groups and figures associated with the alt-right and the wider far right are regularly denied access to social media platforms, payment providers, direct communication platforms, basic internet infrastructure and, even, dating platforms. Consequently, the

ENCRYPTED MESSAGING

Encryption refers to a process of encoding information to render it inaccessible to unauthorised parties. There are many messaging applications – “apps” – that offer “end-to-end” encryption which means that messages are unintelligible to everyone, including the service provider, until they reach the receiver’s device, protecting users who do not wish for their communications to be intercepted. Many of these apps also include other security features such as disappearing messages.

Such apps have become increasingly popular with security-minded far right groups. Andrew Anglin of the nazi Daily Stormer website advises against communicating “any single thing with your real name or real IP address” over “Jewish spy applications” such as Discord or Skype, recommending the Signal app instead.

Another such messaging app, Telegram, has been used by ISIS extremists to propagandise and recruit and the Islamist perpetrator of the 2017 New Year’s Day shooting in Istanbul, that left dozens of people dead, received directions from a commander in Raqqa, Syria, via the app.

The most widely trusted encrypted e-mail service is ProtonMail, developed by European Organization for Nuclear Research scientists in 2014. It requires no personal information on signup and does not keep logs of IP addresses. The banned British nazi group National Action has recommended the service be used “by any and all serious Nationalists”.

movement has been forced to find solace on other platforms or create its own.

ALT-TECH

“We need parallel everything. I do not want to ever have to spend a single dollar at a non-movement business”, Pax Dickinson wrote on his now banned Twitter account in June 2017.

Dickinson would the same month launch *Counter.Fund*, a fundraising platform with the ambition to fund political action against “Marxist political correctness and the globalist progressive Left”.

This became the start of what would, two months later, become part of a sub-movement within the alt-right dubbed “The Free Speech Tech Alliance” – or just “alt-tech” for short – in an article penned by the founders of Gab, an alt-right-associated Twitter clone.

The article paints a picture of an increasingly hostile climate for far right ideas online, at the time exemplified by the firing of Google employee James Damore for a manifesto against the company’s efforts to close the gender pay gap.

“The time is now for patriots and free thinkers inside and outside of Silicon Valley to organise, communicate in a safe way, and start building”, the article declares.

GAB

Probably the best and most successful example of one of the new platforms is Gab, an

independently developed entity that positions itself as a competitor to Twitter and was started in 2016 by Andrew Torba, a 25-year-old entrepreneur from Pennsylvania.

The platform quickly gained popularity in the alt-right as a Twitter alternative after a number of high-profile activists were banned in the wake of Charlottesville and policy changes on the platform in December 2017.

The platform soon made overtures to the alt-right by making a green frog head its logo but it did not admit direct support for the movement, instead positioning itself in opposition to “big tech” and for freedom of speech.

However, the platform became the focus of media attention after it was revealed that Robert Bowers, the killer of eleven Jewish people at the Tree of Life Congregation Synagogue in Pittsburgh, on 28 October 2018, was active on the site.

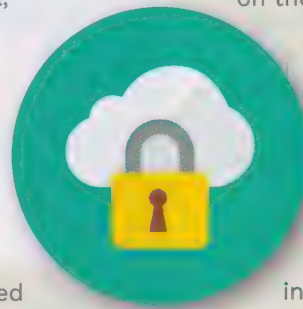
Bowers had posted white supremacist and antisemitic content and glorified violent far right groups on the platform without being suspended.

This is unsurprising considering that Torba and Gab have, time and time again, expressed support for the American far right and alt-right causes. Torba appeared on Alex Jones’s Infowars after Jones’s ban from many of the mainstream social media platforms in August 2018. In an interview, he argued that they

“need to stop playing on the left’s playgrounds”, as opposed to its mainstream competitors.

Gab has however continued to claim it is “for everyone”. Sometimes, it refers to the single anonymous user, described as a “progressive Canadian rapper”, as proof of its dedication to diversity of opinion.

Even if this progressive Canadian rapper actually exists, it is probably better described as the exception that proves the rule than a reflection of the average user on the platform. The free-for-all attitude to racism and other forms of hate unsurprisingly makes the atmosphere on the platform toxic.



“FREE SPEECH” PLATFORMS

The, at least superficial, dedication to an absolutist interpretation of free speech is something Gab shares with all platforms in the alt-tech world.

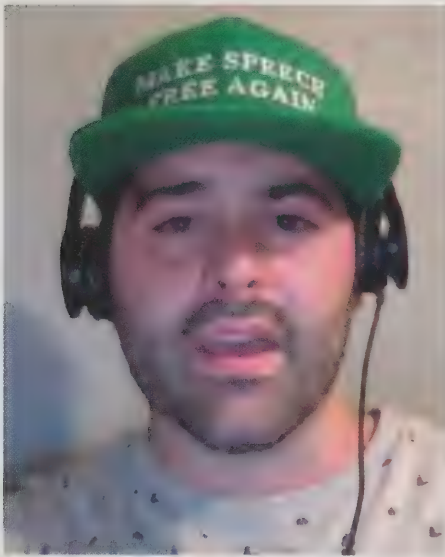
They market themselves in opposition to mainstream platforms which, they argue, assert varying degrees of illegitimate censorship on their movement. Twitter clone Gab uses the motto “people and free speech first” while reddit clone Voat, for example, uses the subtler tag-line on the same theme: “Have your say”.

Evidently, the bans by mainstream platforms have fed into the free speech campaign and notions that the Alternative Right is a suppressed movement.

These platforms continue to mobilise the common claim according to which the alt-right portrays itself as an underdog in a populist attempt to gain sympathy for its cause and to make itself appear edgier and, thereby, more attractive to future supporters and current ones.

Framing matters in this way, moving over to the new platforms becomes an act of resistance in itself, likely the only competitive advantage the alternative platforms can get over the likes of Facebook and Twitter.

This rhetoric’s honesty can, of course, be questioned. Richard Spencer has himself stated that the alt-right does not actually support freedom of speech and although there is no reason to question the ideological conviction of the founders of most of these platforms, similar to the mainstream platforms, nearly all of the larger initiatives have some sort of profit motives, meaning that



Andrew Torba who was started Gab, a competitor to Twitter, in 2016

statements such as those of Gab's founder about running a platform "for the people" should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Like any for-profit business portraying an ethical outside, these platforms capitalise on the free speech issue in addition to existing fears of data mining by mainstream social media.

The limited successes that the alt-tech movement has had is, in part, the result of mopping up those high profile alt-right individuals banned from mainstream platforms.

This has in turn attracted their supporters onto these new platforms. Daily Stormer's Andrew Anglin, for example, is one of the most active and high-profile accounts on Gab which remains his only social media platform.

However, overall, the success stories of alternative platforms have been few and far between. Out of the multiple projects detailed in this article, only a fraction is still active and even fewer can be called successful.

Gab has continued to grow but its users remain quite inactive. A study by Zannettou et al, titled *What is Gab? A Bastion of Free Speech or an Alt-Right Echo Chamber?* showed that just 20 percent of users on the social network change their profile description and 43 percent have posted zero posts.

While Gab has grown significantly, it still suffers alt-right ghettoisation because the platform simply does not have enough users to spark interesting conversations.

In other words, the platform is still too alternative. It provides a place for users kicked off Twitter, a safe-haven of sorts, but the possibility of unmoderated speech

is, in itself, not enough of a reason for some to engage.

It is clear that even ardent supporters of the Alternative Right do not necessarily want to move to alternative platforms but they do it because they have to. Thus, both Gab and the similar video sharing website BitChute, in essence, act as backup platforms to the mainstream platforms.

TAKING CONTROL OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE

However, one of the biggest issues facing "alt-tech" is not exclusive to its social media platforms. A well-constructed platform is useless if the domain name gets seized or the hosts are shut down. This is the fate suffered by the Daily Stormer in 2017. Similarly, a funding platform cannot function without the capability of processing payments that often rely on mainstream options such as PayPal.

Therefore, the question of control over the infrastructural services that the modern web relies on has increasingly become a central question to the alt-tech movement.

This is highlighted by the fact that the alt-right is a movement wracked by ideological differences and with a history of members attacking each other.

A thread on the Daily Stormer's forum highlights these worries. In it, a user expresses concern about the newly-launched Freezoxee social network that advertises itself as a free-speech platform but has a policy of blocking "authoritarian ideologies". The user writes that they "have to conclude that the real reason he is starting a new site is so he can be the one making the ultimate decisions on who to ban."

Many have therefore started to argue for the need, not for parallel platforms, but a decentralisation of internet infrastructure. The decentralisation philosophy is the radical idea of doing away with any concentrated point of power (or failure) completely.

Anarchist and libertarian programmers and internet activists have long built platforms facilitating a decentralised internet outside of the control of either governments or big corporations.

Technologies that make it difficult or impossible to monitor internet usage and censor content have caught the interest of the alt-right. The video sharing platform BitChute is one of the first platforms to make use of these technologies.

BANNING AND THE VICTIM NARRATIVE

The trend of the Alternative Right creating its own platforms is a consequence of and, likely, an unavoidable side effect of, the bans on associated accounts on various mainstream platforms.

While the project of creating separate platforms has largely been met with failure, this should not be taken as an indication that this will continue to be the case.

It is a relatively tech-knowledgeable movement and separate movements striving for a more open and decentralised internet will undoubtedly be taken advantage of by the Alternative Right.

To keep far right accounts out of mainstream platforms remains an important tactic. It limits their ability to reach and radicalise potential supporters, their influence over social debate and the damage done to other users on those platforms and in the offline world.

At the same time, the bans highlight an important contemporary issue, that of the dependency on private companies as platforms for public debate.

Putting the arenas for public debate at the whim of a relatively small number of private institutions is something many are concerned about.

The Alternative Right has tapped into this concern. This begs the question of how bans should be carried out in order not to amplify the claims of suppression that have become an increasingly source of important in-group definition for the entire movement and it reaches across the divide between the racial nationalist alt-right and the cultural nationalist alt-light.

Further, it reached outside the Alternative Right itself. The far right figurehead Tommy Robinson, for example, has received almost unprecedented support from the movement as well as establishment politicians and ordinary people.

It is therefore vital to strive to make bans as consistent as possible and also to examine the effect of bans and how to implement them properly, not just for the individual platforms but for the wider network and movement.

The inconsistent application of terms of use has undoubtedly created a feeling of arbitrariness to bans that can attract attention and help far right figures present themselves as martyrs.

NF Remembrance Sunday

The National Front (NF), made it's annual pilgrimage to the cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday in November. As ever, it was noticeable absences that made the day all the more interesting.

A year mired in controversy and infighting showed itself at the cenotaph in London as the National Front bid farewell to another year of internecine warfare and scandal.

The party underwent a change of leadership during 2018 which led to a whole swathe of resignations and a large bout of internal wrangling and threats of violence. The party's new Chair, Tony Martin, was supposed to bring a new dynamism and unity to the party but instead continued the more recent tradition of humiliation and scandal.

By the time the party did crawl through central London on what must rank in the top two of lowest turnouts for the party, the likes of Julie Lake and Kevin Bryan who had financed and steered much of the party for the previous twelve months were notably absent.

As too were large numbers from the London Forum who appear to have abandoned plans to take the party over. Instead, it was left to stone-faced Nazi veteran Richard Edmonds and Holocaust denier Alison Chabloz to front the party in besmirching Britain and the Commonwealth's war dead.

Edmonds and Chabloz marching alongside each other was made the more interesting as he was at the time party to a soon to be released denouncement of Chabloz, decrying her a "traitor and saboteur."

The leader of the Racial Volunteer Force (RVF), Mark Atkinson, managed his annual appearance though this year without his customary RVF wreath or uniformed accomplices.

Heads were turned by the appearance of recently released National Action man Lawrence Burns. Burns was jailed for four years last year for incitement to racial hatred.



(top) Less than fifty NF members soiled the memory of British and Commonwealth war dead

(insert) Holocaust Denier Alison Chabloz lays her wreath unaware she was about to be denounced

(bottom) Racial Volunteer Force leader Mark Atkinson

REWRITING HISTORY: LYING, DENYING & REVISING THE HOLOCAUST

IN 1945, as the news of organised mass murder and gas chambers shocked the world, the far right's dream of a fascist future was left shattered in the ruins of Berlin. The first to deny the crimes of the Third Reich were the Nazis themselves, who sought to hide all trace of their attempted extermination of the Jews. Since that time, denial of the Holocaust has warped and shifted in numerous ways.

Rewriting History, kindly supported by the Association of Jewish Refugees, provides an accessible but comprehensive exploration of what denial is, and the various ways people have tried to revise the facts of the Holocaust.

Part of the necessity of this book is borne of the inevitable: As time passes, there are fewer people who can bear witness to the horrors of the Holocaust, meaning children, students, and the general public are vulnerable to the narratives being peddled by those who seek to diminish the unique place in history that the Holocaust holds, or even to claim that Jewish people use the 'myth' of the Holocaust to gain unfair advantage. As such, this book provides an accessible outline for those unfamiliar with the fundamental tactics, traditions and narratives of Holocaust denial.

However, some of the changes that have prompted this book are sadly a product of our changing political climate. We face an environment where facts are being discredited by those hawking conspiracies for hateful agendas and where the internet and social media have drastically altered how we engage with the truth.

To meet these challenges, this book confronts the role of conspiratorial thinking in Holocaust denial as well as denial in the age of social media. Moreover, with antisemitism in resurgence across

REWRITING HISTORY:

LYING, DENYING & REVISING THE HOLOCAUST



the political spectrum and denial remaining a global practice, this book addresses denial by the left and right, in the Middle East and North Africa, in Eastern Europe and, in an exploration that demonstrates some of the complexities of modern denial, amongst some Muslims in the West.

PRICE: **£5.99** (+£3.60 P&P), KINDLE: **£3.50**

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Blocked from the USA

Stephen Yaxley-Lennon wanted to go on a high profile trip to the US. HOPE not hate stopped him. But, Matthew McGregor warns, he'll keep trying.

WHEN THE ANTI-MUSLIM think tank, the Middle East Forum, announced that they had invited Stephen Lennon, also known as Tommy Robinson, to speak at an event in Washington D.C., it was the culmination of months of cosyng up between the US and the UK far right. It provided Lennon with an opportunity for a high profile platform with Members of Congress, lavish media coverage, and the potential for a fundraising windfall. Just a few weeks later, the event went ahead with Lennon speaking via video link, not in the small windowless room, disrupted by protesters who delayed the speech by 20 minutes. This is the story of how Lennon's speech was blocked.

Stephen Lennon's attempted journey to a huge payday in the USA began during his trial for contempt of court. One of the organisations that came to his aid during that prison term and subsequent retrial for endangering the trial of a since-convicted grooming gang was the Middle East Forum. This shadowy anti-Muslim think tank in the US donated thousands to cover Lennon's legal bills. The MEF helped pay for the demonstrations that took place on the streets of London after his imprisonment. And when he was released from prison their representatives were there on the steps of the court to welcome him.

This relationship led to an audacious invitation: the MEF announced that they wanted to bring Lennon to the Congress of the United States to speak to America's polite elite. The invitation was issued alongside the Conservative Opportunity Society, an organisation chaired by GOP Rep. Steve King, an

avowed White Nationalist. The invite was backed up by six other members of Congress.

We were worried about the invitation. Giving Lennon a platform alongside members of Congress – and the associated respectability that would provide – was bad enough. But our research team quickly crunched some numbers and estimated that Lennon could make in the range of £1m as a result of the trip. This would come from money raised

on the trip itself, and from increased online donations from supporters in the US, based on our projections.

There was always going to be a chance Lennon wouldn't make it into the US. He's currently serving a 10-year ban for entering America illegally. In 2012, he flew to New York on a fake passport, after being denied a visa over his convictions for violence. He was stopped by border police at JFK airport and sent for questioning. He absconded from the airport, entered the US (therefore breaking the law), and flew back to the UK the next

“We hope you would agree that it would send a terrible signal if a convicted felon deemed inadmissible to the United States such as Yaxley-Lennon were allowed to travel to your country and speak before a prominent audience despite his conviction for previously entering the United States illegally”

British parliamentarians in their letter to the US Secretary of State



day. He was arrested and sentenced to a prison term on his return.

But Lennon now has friends in high places in the US. The network of anti-Muslim activists Lennon is now allied to have contacts in the White House and the Department of Justice. We knew Lennon was working those angles to get his travel ban lifted. We mobilised a wide-ranging campaign to stop him.

The newspapers were briefed, raising the spectre of a £1m payday in outlets like the *Guardian*, *Mail* and *Mirror*. Supportive MPs raised the issues in Parliament. And we mobilised supporters across the country, building a petition of thousands, and bombarding the

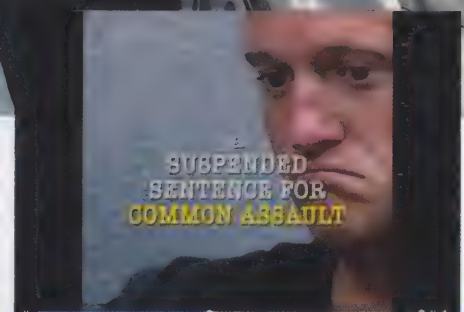


American ambassador to the UK with tweets demanding he ensure Lennon's trip was blocked. On the day Lennon was spotted at the US embassy in London, where he was attending an interview as part of the process to get his travel ban lifted, more than 50 MPs from across the parties, wrote to Mike Pompeo, the Secretary of State.

"We hope you would agree that it would send a terrible signal if a convicted felon deemed inadmissible to the United States such as Yaxley-Lennon were allowed to travel to your country and speak before a prominent audience despite his conviction for previously entering the United States illegally", the parliamentarians wrote. The letter made headlines in the

US and the UK. The next day, Lennon told the far right news outlet Gateway Pundit that he wouldn't be making the trip to DC, after all, blaming a busy diary!

Our campaign, bringing together research, digital campaigning and work with supportive Members of Parliament, got the result we wanted. Stephen Lennon angrily denounced our efforts, saying that the campaign had caused a 40% decline in donations to his website. But we know he will try to reach the US again – he's said as much. And while Lennon has friends in DC, and Trump is in the White House, we know there's a risk he'll make it. We'll be ready to go again the next time he tries. ■



Our new video about "Tommy Robinson" and his criminal record has been going viral online. Half a million people have watched the video on Twitter and Facebook. Based on the opening credits of 'The Bill', viewers get a full rundown of the many times Stephen Lennon has been caught by the fuzz.

INSIDE DAVID ICKE'S WATFORD TALK

By Charlie Prentice

DAVID ICKE, one of the world's most famous conspiracy theorists, spoke for four hours to a crowd of hundreds at the nearly full Watford Colosseum on Friday 23rd November.

Alongside a heavy use of New Age jargon (such as "vibrational frequencies" and "infinite consciousness") and anti-"PC" ranting, Icke claimed that "indigenous" populations were being played off against immigrants by a shadowy "hidden hand" that is allegedly encouraging mass immigration.

An image of the billionaire philanthropist George Soros (who is of Jewish heritage), depicted as a fiery demon with reptile eyes, was displayed on screen next to images of refugees and of the Arab Spring. Another image depicted Soros as a controlling puppet master, and another alleged that "Rothschild Zionism" was a constituent part of a supposed ring of global manipulators. In indulging in such tropes, Icke is echoing a longstanding tradition of conspiratorial antisemitism that has portrayed Jews as dictating world events, pushing globalism and mass immigration to undermine white populations. In the modern era Soros has become the focus of numerous conspiracy theories, many of which are



(above) The Watford Colosseum fills up ahead of David Icke's talk

(right) An image Tweeted by David Icke

patently antisemitic.

The strength of the antisemitic tropes promulgated by Icke is startling, but sadly nothing new. The former footballer and one-time Green Party spokesman has dabbled in antisemitism since the 1990s, when he began overdosing on bizarre ideas. His popularity has continued, in part because many in the mainstream have failed to take his antisemitism as a credible threat.

This weekend, Momentum released a video railing against Icke's antisemitism, an encouraging step by the group towards tackling the ongoing issue of anti-Jewish sentiment in Labour and on the left more generally. The video correctly states that Icke is often regarded as a "harmless eccentric", and



subsequently dismissed. Indeed, it was at times hard not to laugh as the former goalkeeper put up slide after slide of his own quotes, or played the opening lies of Oasis' "Don't Look Back In Anger" to bolster an argument on Friday.

However, alongside such absurdity, Icke has long mixed in what actor and blogger Marlon Solomon, who is currently touring his show "Conspiracy Theory: A Lizard's Tale", has described as "at times, little less than Nazi-strength antisemitic propaganda". To take just a few examples highlighted by

Solomon in the HOPE not hate magazine, featuring in Icke's kaleidoscope of paranoia is *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the archetypal antisemitic text that alleges that Jews are planning to infiltrate the media, financial and political organisations for the purposes of world domination. Whilst Icke has previously referred to the titular Elders as "the Illuminati" rather than Jews, he has also referred to them as "Rothschild Zionists". In his book *And The Truth Shall Set You Free* Icke writes: "I strongly believe

that a small Jewish clique which has contempt for the mass of Jewish people worked with non-Jews to create the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the Second World War".

Also important to mention is Icke's protégé Richie Allen, who has hosted a number of antisemites and Holocaust deniers on his online conspiracy theory radio show, including Alison Chabloz, Nick Kollerstrom, and Mark Collett. Allen's content was hosted on Icke's website whilst his own was revamped.

Momentum's correct decision to call out Icke for his appalling record has not gone down well amongst all, however. Following the release of the video, Solomon has highlighted an ensuing row on the 18,000+ strong Facebook group "Jeremy Corbyn – True Socialism", including admins of the group defending Icke, and claims that Momentum founder Jon Lansman has a "zionist agenda".

Icke's theories have also seen him referenced by some on the hardcore anti-Jewish far right. Andrew Anglin of the Daily Stormer – the largest neo-nazi website in the world – wrote in 2016 that "For decades, David Icke has been the only man willing to stand up and talk about the fact that reality is an illusion and our thoughts and emotions are controlled by reptile people (Jews)". Anglin goes on to state that "David Icke maybe or maybe does not believe in reptile people, but probably either way they are a metaphor for the Jews".

Red Ice Creations, now the premier media network of the white nationalist alt-right, initially built its following as a conspiracy theory website, hosting Icke multiple times, with episode titles such as "Origins of Israel & New Mono World Order" and "The Manipulation of Humanity". Red Ice now hosts Holocaust deniers and antisemites

such as Alfred Schaefer, Germar Rudolf, David Duke, Eric Hunt, Gilad Atzmon and Anglin as a matter of course.

As the New Statesman has argued, the importance of tackling the spread of conspiracy theories as a deadly serious issue was brought home by recent terror attacks in the USA, in which which pipe bombs were mailed to Soros and American politicians, and 11 worshippers were gunned down in a synagogue in Pittsburgh. Cesar Sayoc, the suspect in the pipe-bombing case, had shared anti-Soros memes online, including one from Icke, with the caption "WORLD IS WAKING UP

TO THE HORRORS OF GEORGE SOROS", shared on the same day the bomb intended for Soros was delivered.

Icke's tour, which has seen him speak at multiple UK dates and is next heading to Australia, has already seen him spread his message to thousands in the UK across political divides. We cannot afford to dismiss the likes of Icke and Alex Jones of InfoWars, the prolific American conspiracy theorist, as irrelevant cranks. Recent research has shown that 60% of British people believe at least one conspiracy theory about how the country is run or regarding the truth of information provided to

citizens. The same study also showed that 31% of Leave voters believed that Muslim immigration is part of a scheme to make Muslims the majority population in Britain, a notion that Icke echoed on Friday in his talk of mass immigration being directed by a "hidden hand".

Present at the event on Friday were people of a variety of ages and backgrounds. Whilst some may have attended for the sheer curiosity, others were evidently enthusiastic about Icke's message. The fact that Icke can nearly fill out such a massive venue should you be a wake up call, as if one were needed, to anti-racists in the UK. ■

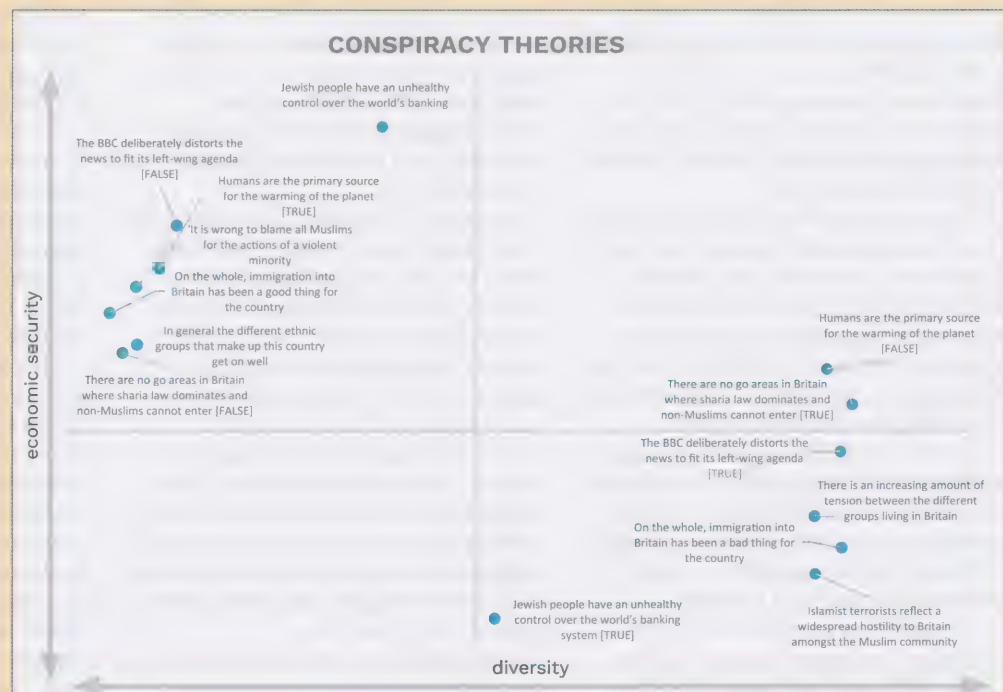
CONSPIRACY THEORIES

HOPE not hate has found that if you believe in one conspiracy then you are more likely to believe in others. Conversely, those who most strongly disbelieve one conspiracy theory are likely to be sceptical of others.

In a YouGov poll of over 10,000 people, commissioned by HOPE not hate in July, we found that people who did not believe in climate change also thought the BBC deliberately distorts the news to push a liberal agenda and believe that there are no go areas in the UK

where Sharia Law dominates and non-Muslims cannot enter.

The one conspiracy theory that did not conform was the view that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system. People believing this tended to be older and poorer. The placement of this issue is more central on the economic security/diversity tangents in the chart below because the conspiracy is also widely believed among British Muslim communities, who are generally found in the bottom left quadrant.



Cas's take on the world

'Good Populism' Is Not the Best Response to 'Bad Populism'**By Cas Mudde**

AFTER THE DUTCH parliamentary elections of 15 March 2017, Prime Minister Mark Rutte triumphantly declared that "good populism" had defeated "bad populism," a claim eagerly and uncritically repeated in media around the world.

It confirmed received wisdom that the best way to defeat the populist radical right, is to co-opt its agenda, albeit in slightly more moderate form.

Few cared that Rutte's claim rested on dubious empirical grounds: compared with the 2012 election, Rutte actually lost big (5.2%) while Geert Wilder's Party for Freedom (PVV) won (3.0% increase) and was joined by a new far right party, Forum for Democracy (FvD), with 1.8%, making their combined scored of 14.9% just less than 1% lower than the PVV's high score of 15.45% in 2010.

Three recent elections now provide more ammunition for the debate on how best to respond to the radical right. In Sweden, the rise of the Sweden Democrats (SD) was not halted in the parliamentary election of 9 September, despite a significant turn to the right by the centre-right Moderates and even the centre-left Social Democrats. Both the Moderates (-3.5%) and the Social Democrats (-2.75%) lost, while the Sweden Democrats were the biggest winners, coming in third with 17.5% (+4.7%).

The results were fairly similar in the much-anticipated regional election in Bavaria, where the hegemonic Christian Social Union (CSU) had practically copied the agenda of the populist radical right Alternative for Germany (AfD), just as it did with the Republicans in the early 1990s.

In fact, the CSU's regional struggle with the AfD has crippled the already troubled Grand Coalition in Berlin, with leading CSU politicians regularly defying "their" Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin and Brussels.

As polls had been indicating for months, it stopped neither the rise of the AfD nor the downfall of the

CSU. After decades of ruling the state as a party fiefdom, the CSU lost its parliamentary majority and 10.5%, a loss of 22% of its 2013 vote.

The AfD entered the Bavarian parliament in its first election with 10.2% of the vote, not only less than polls had been predicting for months but also some 2% less than the party had received in Bavaria in the 2017 federal elections.

Finally, in the much less covered local elections in Belgium, the "democratic nationalist" New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) lost heavily, despite having veered staunchly right and making opposition to immigration, and its tough (and popular) Secretary of State for Asylum, Migration and Administrative Simplification, Theo Francken, the focus of its campaign.

At the same time, the radical right Flemish Interest (VB) returned from the dead, after focusing its campaign on opposition to the "soft" Francken, gaining its best score in over a decade.

While extrapolations of local elections to national elections should always be treated with caution, the local elections indicate a possible big loss for N-VA and win for VB in next year's mass election year, when Belgium will hold regional, national, and European elections on 26 May 2019.

So, what, if anything, can we learn from these three recent elections? First, the populist radical right is still on the rise in Western Europe. Second, mainstream parties that co-opt the populist radical right agenda, even if they exclude the party itself, still lose elections. Third, the focus on socio-cultural issues – like immigration and, to a lesser extent, European integration – helps not just the populist radical right but also the Greens, who were the second biggest winners in both Bavaria and Flanders.

Does this mean that voters prefer the original over the copy as Jean-

Marie Le Pen famously declared in the 1990s? Not necessarily so.

Both AfD and SD fell well below the numbers they polled several months ago, let alone in late 2016, when the EU-Turkey deal had taken the so-called "refugee crisis" off the top of the political agenda. Some defenders of the co-optation strategy therefore claim that they would have done much better if the mainstream right (and sometimes left) had not moved staunchly right.

Unfortunately, this is hard to (dis)prove. The "immigration realistic" Turkey deal has clearly lowered the salience of the immigration issue leading to lower support for populist radical right parties whose main focus is on immigration.

Following the same logic, centring election campaigns on the issues of the populist radical right and using its frames (immigration as threat etc.), will heighten its importance and, therefore, strength. Even if a more anti-immigrant position will keep some voters from abandoning the centre-right for the radical right, many voters are not just nativist but also populist, distrusting the mainstream parties and, therefore, not open to leaving the radical right for the mainstream right.

In the end, of course, the question is, or should be, a moral one. Copying the issues and frames of the populist radical right leads to populist radical right debate and policies, whether espoused and adopted by populist radical right parties or mainstream parties.

This is also the lesson of the Netherlands, where the exclusion of the PVV has not prevented the mainstream right from even further toughening immigration and integration policies.

Assuming that we (still) consider both the messenger and the message as a threat to liberal democracy, "good populism" is both empirically and morally the wrong strategy to fight "bad populism." ■

Greece: Golden Dawn sanctioned by courts and Parliament but not by public opinion

From Panayote Dimitras for Greek Helsinki Monitor in Athens

GREECE'S NAZI Golden Dawn (GD) party may be losing some of its elected representatives who go to or set up other extreme right parties, may be seeing several of its members, including key leaders, convicted in trials separate from the main trial (that goes on with damning evidence being produced against it) and may be sanctioned in parliament. It may also be seeing another extreme right party solidly securing strength in opinion polls. All opinion polls, however, also confirm that voting intentions for GD are on the rise.

On 19 March 2018, GD chief Nikos Michaloliakos, along with GD MPs Elias Kasidiaris and Panayotis Iliopoulos, were censured for unparliamentary behaviour by a plenary session of the Hellenic Parliament.

This motion was triggered by consecutive verbal attacks by the three GD MPs against the four Turkish minority MPs, calling them "Turkish agents" during parliamentary sessions.

The censure also includes withholding 25% of the MPs' monthly salary. It was the first-ever censure of a party leader in the parliament's history. Undaunted by the sanctions, GD MP Yannis Lagos, on 22 March, branded all the government left party SYRIZA's MPs as "swindlers," "anti-Greek" and "traitors." Parliament censured him too.

Then, on 15 June 2018, GD MP Constantine Barbarousis called in parliament for the arrest by the army of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence, because of their allegedly treasonous behaviour over the issue of the agreement between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia to solve the bilateral dispute on the latter's name.

Immediately, he was expelled from GD and charged with preparatory acts of high treason.

He managed to escape his arrest but later showed up to the prosecutor and the investigative judge who set him free on parole.

After the expulsion of Barbarousis, GD has 15 MPs, three down from the September 2015 election. Already in 2017, Dimitris Koukoutsis and Nikos Michos left GD. In January 2018, Michos joined Greece's oldest extreme right-wing party, George Karatzaferis' Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), which thus returned to Parliament after six years.

Then, in April 2018, one of GD three MEPs elected in 2014, Eleftherios Synadinou, left GD and launched, in June 2018, a new extreme right party, the Patriotic Radical Union (PATRIE), which is represented by him in the EP and by Koukoutsis who joined PATRIE in the Greek Parliament.

Meanwhile, several current or former GD MPs or members have been convicted by Greek courts in the past twelve months.

Most notably, GD chief Nikos Michaloliakos was convicted, on 9 February 2018, for incitement to violence by an Athens Misdemeanours Court that handed him an eight-month suspended jail term.

On 3 September 2011, in a speech full of hate to a party audience, he threatened the party's opponents that "we will break their heads." Referring to GD's allies, he said: "Yes! With fascists, with Nazis, criminals and stabbers, whatever they want. But not with traitors and two-faced people!"

Referring to the Jewish editor of Greece's largest selling weekly newspaper, he added "If ever there is justice, he and his little Jews will be turned into soap." It was the GD chief's first-ever criminal conviction.

A month later, on 12 March 2018, another Athens Misdemeanours Court found GD MP Giorgos



Nazi Golden Dawn chief Nikos Michaloliakos

Germentis guilty of verbally abusing and trying to assault Athens Mayor George Kaminis during an Athens municipality event on 2 May 2013. He had to be overpowered by municipal guards while, during the scuffle, a girl suffered a light injury to her arm. He was handed a four-months suspended jail sentence.

Despite its rampant criminality, opinion polls suggest that Golden Dawn is not only holding but, in fact, increasing its strength. In most polls it flags up 8%-9% – up from 7% in 2015 – and this despite the presence in the polls of another extreme right-wing party, Hellenic Solution (EL), formed in June 2016 by tele-journalist and former LAOS MP, Kyriakos Velopoulos, and polling around 2%.

At the same time, LAOS, which did not contest the September 2015 election, polls around 1% while the extreme right-wing party and government coalition partner Independent Greeks (ANEL) polls around 1.5%, down from 3.5% in 2015. This means that the combined tally for the extreme right (GD + EL + LAOS + ANEL) hovers around 13.5% up from 10.5% in the last parliamentary election.

As, however, the next elections will probably be the May 2019 European elections – where small parties always receive higher vote shares than in national elections – all these smaller extreme right parties aim at the 3% threshold that will guarantee them an MEP. Golden Dawn hopes for a repeat of its 2014 score (9.5%) that gave it three MEPs. ■

The Holocaust and historical revisionism in Hungary

Bernard Rorke reports from Budapest

ON THE RIVERBANK of the Danube, close by the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, set into the concrete are sixty pairs of rusting shoes. At three separate places, cast-iron signs read in Hungarian, English and Hebrew: "To the memory of victims shot into the Danube by Arrow Cross militiamen in 1944-45."

Created by the sculptor Gyula Pauer and film director Can Togay, the memorial was installed on the Pest embankment in 2005. The shoes, modelled on actual pairs of men's, women's and children's shoes from the 1940s, bear silent but powerful testament to the frenzied butchery of the fascist Arrow Cross units who herded their terrified Jewish victims to the banks of the Danube and forced them to take off their shoes before shooting them directly into the frozen waters of "the Jewish cemetery".

Shoes had become valuable wartime commodities for murderers to trade on the black market.

Survivor Zsuzsanna Ozsváth recounted: "I heard a series of popping sounds. Thinking the Russians had arrived, I slunk to the window. But what I saw was worse than anything I had ever seen before, worse than the most frightening accounts I had ever witnessed. Two Arrow Cross men were standing on the embankment of the river, aiming at and shooting a group of men, women and children into the Danube – one after the other, on their coats the Yellow Star."

ARROW CROSS BARBARISM

When the fascist Ferenc Szálasi seized power in October 1944, his Arrow Cross (*Nyilas*) units launched a hideously cruel campaign of terror, killing thousands of Budapest's Jews.

Although Hungarian Jews had been subject to harsh legal and economic sanctions since 1938, they survived the first four and a half years of World War II relatively intact. However, following German occupation on 19 March 1944, Hungarian Jewry was subjected to the most ruthless and concentrated liquidation drive of the

war that eventually claimed more than 400,000 lives.

Budapest's Jews – murdered in their homes, in the streets or by the riverside; done to death on forced marches or deported to be annihilated in Auschwitz – all faced what Primo Levi described as "a defenceless and naked death, ignominious and vile".

The fascist perpetrators demonstrated for all centuries to come what "unsuspected reserves of viciousness and madness lie latent in man even after millennia of civilized life". Levi wrote that it is not permissible to forget but, today, the politics of remembrance have become very fraught in Viktor Mihály Orbán's authoritarian Christian-national state of Hungary.

THE POLITICS OF REMEMBRANCE

Hungary's foreign minister, Peter Szijjarto is quick to repudiate any accusations of antisemitism levelled at the Orbán regime as "unworthy and unacceptable", regularly advances the claim that Hungary has done the most in Europe against antisemitism and parrots the Orbán line: "We have declared zero tolerance for antisemitism." So why does nobody (apart from Benjamin Netanyahu) fully swallow that line?

It would be inaccurate to claim that Fidesz has an official state-sponsored policy of antisemitism. Rather it is the case that, when abroad, party leaders make credible statements in English, acknowledging the state's complicity in the Holocaust and its failure to protect the lives of Hungary's Jews.

However, at home and in Hungarian, Fidesz indulges in outrageous historical revisionism, fails to censure crude antisemitism from high within its own ranks and actively works with its hireling ideologues to rehabilitate war criminals and fascists.

'BRAZEN ATTEMPTS TO FALSIFY HISTORY'

In June 2017, Orbán made a barefaced bid to rehabilitate the wartime dictator, when he stated that it was thanks to statesmen like Miklós

Horthy that Hungary was not "buried under history in the trying times" of the second and third decades of the Twentieth Century.

This shift by Orbán over to the political terrain of the far right prompted World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder to write in protest to Orbán: "The terror that Admiral Horthy, an unabashed anti-Semite, inflicted on the Jewish community of Hungary...and his role in the deportation and murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews, must never be forgotten and can never be excused."

The most blatant act of historical revisionism was the 2014 construction of the memorial in Szabadság Tér (Freedom Square) – a piece of nationalist kitsch that features an eagle (Germany) swooping down on the archangel Gabriel (Hungary) – a stone's throw from the statue of Horthy commissioned by the fascist Jobbik party.

The memorial is dedicated to "all the victims of the 19 March 1944 German invasion of Hungary". A group of Holocaust survivors and Jewish activists assembled a counter-memorial of stones, shoes, and personal mementoes at the site, where they regularly gather to protest against this disgraceful whitewashing of history.

On 26 January 2014, in an open letter, the distinguished historian Randolph L. Braham returned a high state award to Hungary, in protest at the "brazen attempt to falsify history" and exonerate the country from its role in the Holocaust. "As a survivor whose parents and many family members were among the hundreds of thousands of murdered Jews," he wrote, "I cannot remain silent, especially since it was my destiny to work on the preservation of the historical record of the Holocaust."

For Braham, "the straw that broke the camel's back" was the plan to erect the memorial which he described as "a cowardly attempt to detract attention from the Horthy regime's involvement



Sixty pairs of rusting iron shoes to the memory of victims shot into the Danube by Arrow Cross militiamen in 1944-45. Photo: Sári Rörke

(below) Protest memorial. Photo: Bernard Rörke



in the destruction of the Jews and to homogenize the Holocaust with the “suffering” of the Hungarians – a German occupation, as the record clearly shows, was not only unopposed but generally applauded.”

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre declared that Hungary must choose whether it is committed to remembrance *or* distortion of the Holocaust: “it cannot have it both ways.”

The blunt fact is that, as things stand for Fidesz, yes it can. Hubris knows no bounds. This regime is unfazed by inconsistencies, untroubled by “liberal” qualms of conscience and blissfully indifferent to international opinion.

At one and the same time, while it declares zero tolerance for the oldest

hatred, virulent antisemites are given prestigious state awards, fake historians are kept busy concocting and curating as they revise and relativise the most atrocious period in Hungarian history so that it functions “to strengthen national awareness.”

Opponents of the regime are vilified on billboards and via state-controlled media with words and imagery that hark back to the 1930s as Orbán keeps his pre-election promises to exact moral, political and legal revenge upon his enemies.

In terms that go way beyond antisemitic dog whistles, Orbán has described the enemy as “not national but international; does not believe in working but speculates with money; does not have its own homeland but feels it owns the whole world.” ■

Modest gains for Sw

The Swedish election result feels like a relief but the Sweden Democrats are still the party that made the biggest gains.

The question now is how the rest of society will deal with the fact that opposition to a multicultural Sweden has grown stronger than ever.

By Daniel Poohl for EXPO in Stockholm

IT COULD have been worse. The nazis of the Nordic Resistance Movement failed and do not appear to have won any seats on municipal councils.

The new far-right party Alternative for Sweden fell flat and did not even come close to entering parliament. According to preliminary results, the Sweden Democrats got 17.7% of the vote, significantly less than what many, not least the party itself, had hoped for.

It's easy to look at things in this way: that it could have been worse. And that it feels good to bask for a moment in relief that the mushrooming mobilisation of the far-right did not completely overturn the political order. That decency lives. That, after all, the vast majority of people in this country are taken aback by the ideology that the SD represent.

THE SD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL ELECTION YET

Despite this, however, there is no escaping the fact that the Sweden Democrats have had their greatest-ever electoral success. We are now tallying the results

of an election that will further consolidate a new political order that includes a large, vigorous nationalist and conservative bloc, surrounded by populist pundits scrounging for "Likes" with their attacks on "political-correctness".

Suspicion and rage wrapped in racism and intolerance have been normalised and have advanced their positions. They did not overturn the system but the SD, and above all the party's base, are here to stay. In the south of Sweden, the party has established itself as the dominant political force.

For the Sweden Democrats, it is two steps forward, one step back.

A decisive question hanging over the coming weeks' parliamentary negotiations to form a government, and over the parties' efforts in the next few years, is that of interpreting the electoral result.

What actually happened? How did we get here? There are those who will say that the SD were weakened by the fact that several other parties sharpened their line in the immigration debate.



It is not that simple. This summer, the SD, judging by the opinion polls, may have been the single biggest party in the country. Their retreat from those high poll numbers is not due to the other parties suddenly starting to talk about immigration. On the contrary.

Once the campaigning got underway, other issues gained prominence. This was unfavourable to the SD.

Of course, there are also other reasons for SD's decline in the polls like the fact that Jimmie Åkesson, from an objective standpoint, campaigned poorly.

He didn't have his facts and numbers straight, and he seemed tired and worn out. Media scrutiny of the party may also have made

a difference. For those who view the SD as merely a protest vote, revelations about ex-nazis on the party's list of MP candidates, and examinations of the party's policies concerning women, have a discouraging effect.

The political focus on migration during the previous parliamentary term has likely helped the SD grow. After the so-called refugee crisis, several parties and pundits have internalised the right-wing populist description of Sweden and immigration has been transformed from a basically good thing into a problem. The Sweden Democrats have been able to ride that wave.

NOT JUST A PROTEST VOTE, THOUGH

There will be those who describe the SD's gains as

Sweden's far right



Sweden Democrats leader Jimmie Åkesson. Photo: Per Pettersson

SD voters, to a greater extent than Moderate or Social Democrat voters, agree with statements such as

- Feminism has gone too far, and immigration must be decreased

- Too much consideration is taken of people who are offended by what others say

- We should not be tolerant and understanding of non-traditional values and perspectives

- Immigration leads to more crime and is too much of a drain on public resources

They also found that just over half of SD voters believe that "Swedishness" is about where you were born – in other words, an even narrower view than the party's own line that it is possible to assimilate to "Swedishness" and that four out of ten SD supporters would not want an immigrant in-law in their family.

These are just a few examples of the report's findings.

They are anybody

Should we really tar the SD voters with this brush, however? Surely, they are not monsters. Surely, they cannot all be racists? Could they not be just like anybody, now that the party has grown so large?

The point is that they have *always been* just anybody. They might have ended up seeing the world in this way after being disappointed, out of sheer frustration or because they were raised this way.

But many of them actually support the Sweden Democrats precisely because it is a party that revolts against the "social-

liberal establishment".

We are so unaccustomed to an unabashed conservatism and nationalism that we mistake their genuine concern for where Sweden is headed for some misguided discontent.

If you are serious about winning back these voters you have to offer something more than just being a poor copy of SD.

It is about offering your own ideas, about breaking the segregation which feeds into racist notions, about revitalising the countryside which is the SD's heartland and solving the problems that people are facing, without accepting the idea that immigrants or minority Swedes are to blame.

THE SUPPORT HAS EXISTED FOR A LONG TIME

Resistance to taking in refugees and a conservatism wrapped in racism are very much alive in Swedish society. The electoral support for a party like the SD has existed for a long time. Now it has been politicised and mobilised.

We know the result of the election but we don't yet know what the government will look like. One thing is certain, however: the idea of Sweden as an open and tolerant country has been dealt a severe blow.

Now we are like most other European countries. We are not exceptional. The winds that are blowing here are the same ones sweeping the continent.

Now the major question is how the other parties, and the vast majority that does not accept the SD's worldview, will act: adapt, hope it goes away on its own or start taking it seriously. ■

no more than a protest vote, that the blame lies with the established parties who have failed to listen to people's dissatisfaction.

That is, of course, true. The right-wing populist and far-right wave have arisen at a time when democracy is not good enough. With the alleged relocation of power to Brussels, a globalised economy, and a Stockholm-centric political establishment, it is easy for many to feel that the politicians are not there for them.

But the right-wing populist answer is not some neutral, politically blank vote. It is not a cry for attention. It is a demand for change. What drives the Sweden Democratic success is a revolt against an open, progressive and multicultural Sweden.

It will take a while before we have all the electoral data from Sunday's election. But we already know enough to piece together a picture of what the world looks like from the eyes of most SD voters.

DON'T WANT IMMIGRANTS IN THE FAMILY

This summer, the report "Sweden Democrat voters. Who are they, where do they come from and where are they going?" was published.

In it, the social scientists Kirsti Julhä, Jens Rydgren and Pontus Strimling compared the political opinions of voters for the Moderates and the Social Democrats. With the disclaimer that the following, of course, does not apply to every single SD voter, this is what they found:

New split in Jobbik

From István Tóth in Budapest

AFTER BEING EXPELLED from the parliamentary faction, there was little doubt that János Volner, vice-president of the far right Jobbik party, would announce his exit from the party together with István Apáti and Erik Fülöp.

Neither of them has given back his parliamentary mandates. It was only a matter of time before the trio would join the Our Country Movement (Mi Hazánk Mozgalom – MHM). In the announcement of his resignation, Volner reiterated that Jobbik had carried out an unacceptable “left liberal turn”.

Tamás Sneider, the new president of Jobbik, was not surprised at Volner's exit as he had been counting on Volner's move since the summer. Sneider thinks there are personal resentments behind this step and that Volner is attacking Jobbik because he could not lead the party's European Parliamentary list and his lover supports László Toroczkai's extreme-right MHM.

Toroczkai is a former Jobbik deputy chairman whom the party expelled in late May after a failed leadership challenge.

Launching the MHM, he called for a “white Hungary”, proclaiming “we want a country that will remain a white island in Europe”. He repeated his racist criticism of Jews and Israel as well as his vile hatred of Roma and migrants.

Former Jobbik vice-president, Előd Novák, was among the first of its leaders to follow Toroczkai out of Jobbik. Former Jobbik spokesperson Dóra Duró, Novák's wife, joined the MHM after she was

excluded from the party's parliamentary group. Duró has personally taken steps to amend the parliamentary House Rules which would make it possible to establish an Our Country Movement parliamentary faction that did not exist at the time of the parliamentary elections. To do so, it would only be necessary to reach out to five MPs. The legislative preparations for this have already been started.

Sneider considers the politicians leaving Jobbik as “traitors” who are behind Fidesz' National System of Cooperation (NER). He claims that they could either have been bought or even blackmailed by Fidesz. Sneider is of the opinion that, in Jobbik, the party members must support the leadership's steps. This is why they accepted their own “national resistance” programme unanimously at Jobbik's general assembly at the end of September.

Sneider excludes all cooperation with Fidesz and its coalition partner KDNP, the Socialists (MSZP), and the Social-Liberal DK and the Liberal Momentum.

However, common candidates could be supported in the local elections in 2019 with the Politics can be Different Party (LMP). The support of Róbert Puzsér, a challenger for the Budapest mayoralty next year, will be taken into account by the Jobbik president.

Sneider declared he has never met Lajos Simicska who was supposed to be massively (financially) behind Jobbik's 2018 election campaign. Simicska was a close friend of PM Viktor Orbán, an ex-



Tamás Sneider, the new president of Jobbik

treasurer of Fidesz and a powerful tycoon, who lost Orbán's confidence and became a foe four years ago.

For his part, Volner tried to curb the “most crazy shifting to the left that Gábor Vona, former party president, had committed”. Volner was also frustrated with Sneider who, reportedly, had a “skinhead past”.

Gábor Szabó, another Jobbik leader, made public the presidential decision that “Jobbik did not consider cooperation with the DK and MSZP at local government level.”

Volner, when asked about it, stated: “everyday practice shows completely different things”, adding that “the difference between Jobbik's officially announced policy and reality is brutal”, moaning that Jobbik had put up a whole “flock of trolls” in an intense campaign against him.

According to Volner, Jobbik's “political focus” is still missing. While the average person always knew Fidesz' political focal points (migration in 2018, household energy price cuts and reduction of state costs in 2014), Vona's party was not able to make its message clear for eight years. He now claims that he has urged Jobbik to become a party

aiming at the European convergence, in other words catching up on Western Europe.

According to Jobbik, Volner himself began the mudslinging. Undoubtedly, Volner is volcanic and tends to lose his temper. For example, he called Tibor Bana, Jobbik's vice-president, “the president's coffee maker”. Interestingly, however, up to now, Volner has not mentioned the names of any Jobbik leaders who wanted – according to him – to set up a joint list with the “greenish” LMP for 2019's European Parliamentary elections.

Szabó, a director of Jobbik, like Tamás Sneider, has recently told the Hungarian daily Népszava that, in Jobbik's leadership, the common list with LMP “had not been raised either as a concrete proposal or as an idea.”

There is no end to the factional warfare. Volner also mentioned that “a lot of dirt [had] accumulated” in Jobbik and that, for a few months, he had fallen silent about it. Now, however, he will not prevent the public disclosure of “financial, political and other information” about Jobbik...more washing of dirty linen. ■



Italian Senator is unfit for Human Rights role

From Italy's Partisans' Association, Brescia

Last month, Italian Senator Stefania Pucciarelli, a member of Matteo Salvini's "Lega" party, became Chairman of the Italian Senate's Human Rights Commission.

Senator Pucciarelli made the headlines in June 2017 when someone noticed her "Like" under a Facebook comment suggesting "ovens" in place of council houses for migrants. The "League" Senator later "unliked" the post and apologised for her "absent-mindedness".

A faux pas, one might say, were it not for the fact that her Facebook profile has always betrayed – and still

does – a certain view of the world: last week, Pucciarelli welcomed the controversial dismantling of an emergency migrant camp in Rome with a meme showing Minister Salvini with a toy bulldozer and the caption "Restoring lawfulness, order and security." It's very hard to find there any sympathy for the rights of LGBT women and men, or members of the Roma community. There are disparaging remarks against young people frequenting left-wing social centres, called "ticks" by the Senator.

After the tragic overdose death, last October, of a 16-year-

old girl found lifeless in a derelict building in Rome, where she had apparently gone to buy drugs, Senator Pucciarelli took on Italy's Partisans Association (ANPI.) The girl's death, quickly followed by rumours that she had been gang-raped and murdered by a group of foreign drug dealers (which later proved largely unfounded) sparked a wave of revulsion, and convinced Interior Minister Salvini to pay a visit to the spot where the body of 16-year-old Desirée had been found. Salvini's visit was met with protests, and an ANPI flag was visible among the protesters.

Commenting on Facebook, Senator Pucciarelli wrote that "The ANPI has now proved to be entirely useless. With this protest, the ANPI and the feminists have killed Desirée a second time."

The appointment as Chairman of the Human Rights Commission has been criticized by – among others – the former President of the Lower House Laura Boldrini and Amnesty's Italian spokesman Riccardo Noury.

Left-wing MP Nicola Fratoianni went further, saying the appointment was akin to "inviting Hannibal Lecter to a vegan meeting." ■

Fascism on the march

200,000 attend far right-organised demonstration in Warsaw, including international fascists writes Joe Mulhall

BY 10am the streets around the Palace of Culture and Science, the vast brick edifice that towers over central Warsaw, had already begun to throng with red and white flags. Most of the crowd wore Polish flag armbands, the young girls had red and white flowers in their hair, the young boys' scarfs and hats were proudly adorned with the Polish eagle.

Ostensibly, it looked like any other national celebration, with patriotic families and friends gathering to commemorate the centenary of the restoration of the country's sovereignty in 1918. Yet look a little closer and a more sinister picture emerges. Some wore scarfs emblazoned with the white supremacist version of the Celtic Cross, while some streaming out of the metro station sported Odal Rune and Nazi SS Black Sun tattoos on their arms and faces, sometimes partly obscured by skull face masks and balaclavas.

The crowds began to gather in earnest from around midday at the Dmowski Roundabout. As patriotic songs blared out across the closed roads, groups huddled around a green gazebo, the roof of which bore the green crooked arm and sword logo of the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo Radykalny – ONR). The trestle tables were loaded with badges, stickers, t-shirts, bandannas reading 'Goodnight Left Side', with an image of one man stamping on the other, and a selection of books including what looked like a self-published Polish language version of Norman Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry*. The men taking the money wore balaclavas, combat trousers, bomber jackets and black Dr Martens boots.

The National Radical Camp is a fascist group named after an



antisemitic organisation from the 1930s of the same name. They are well known for being the organiser of numerous marches in Mylenice, a town in southern Poland, to mark the anniversary of the anti-Jewish riots in that city in 1936.

Joining them as co-organisers of this demonstration were All-Polish Youth, a virulently homophobic far-right youth organisation whose motto is 'Youth Faith Nationalism'. They erected their own gazebo adjacent to that of the ONR and raised their own triangular flags – a sword on a green background – and began to distribute stickers and leaflets.

As the two o'clock start time grew nearer, ever larger groups of balaclava-clad men gathered and the first of countless red flares was lit. The city echoed with the sound of exploding bangers, making all but the most seasoned demonstrators jump and

flinch. What started as a trickle became a flood as people burst out of every tributary road, alleyway and metro station.

The police presence was inconceivably small with just the odd group of officers scattered around, albeit with pump action shotguns and strings of cartridges down their arms. This demonstration was marshaled by the far-right organisers themselves. The roads along the route were lined by All-Polish Youth activists, faces covered, red electrical tape around their arms, some wearing military style helmets and protective glasses.

The ONR had a flatbed lorry with a PA system over which call and response was demanded of the crowd, while someone pounded a bass drum to keep the chants in time. Then, the Polish national anthem boomed over the loudspeaker and the crowd, by this time tens of thousands strong,

in Warsaw



exploded into rapturous song with thousands of red flares lighting up the grey November sky. People shot flares high into the sky or let off fireworks that exploded over the heads of the crowd. The march was about to begin.

DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

The week prior to the march had been an uncertain and tumultuous one for the organisers. Just days before it was due to take place the mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, banned the demonstration, citing the likelihood of violence and hate speech. Just hours later Poland's President, Andrzej Duda of the radical right Law and Justice party, announced that the Polish state would organise its own demonstration at the same time and along the same route as the demonstration planned by the fascists. Negotiations ensued and a deal was struck between the Polish authorities and the far right, meaning

the President and a small state contingent would march first, closely followed by the main demonstration organised by the fascists.

As the march was about to start, Duda climbed onto the back of a green military-style jeep, took the microphone and addressed the enormous crowd before him, now easily over 200,000. As he looked out he would have seen the massed flags of the fascist ONR, the green flags of the All-Polish Youth, a large contingent of flags of the Italian fascist group Forza Nuova and a sea of skinheads in bomber jackets. This didn't stop him.

So large was the crowd it took three hours for the demonstrators to all file past the start point. By the time they had, the city was cloaked in darkness, illuminated only by the mass of red pyrotechnics.

The event attracted the far right from all over the world. Flights from the UK carried groups of British racists to Warsaw including a group of around 15 Nazi skinheads, proudly wearing KKK t-shirts, braces and boots who left from Stansted airport on Saturday morning, ready for a secret Nazi gig in Poland that evening. A small group of British Generation Identity activists including Sam Sibbons flew out for the weekend.

Other Brits in Poland for the event were Stephen Yaxley Lennon's (AKA Tommy Robinson) former team members Lucy Brown and Caolan Robertson, who appeared to be working alongside the racist alt-right Canadian YouTuber Stefan Molyneux and the American alt-light 'citizen journalist' Jack Posobiec. Lennon himself had been due to speak at the event but cancelled several days before. Despite that, several British vloggers with 'Free Tommy' high visibility jackets were on the demonstration. British activists James Goddard and Tracy Blackwell were also in attendance.

FLAGS, FLARES AND FIREWORKS

The march streamed down towards the Poniatowski Bridge, stretched over the expansive Vistula river and past the National stadium. Hundreds

of bangers were dropped over the edge and down into the archways, exploding with mighty bangs that reverberated up through the floor. The intensity of the flares and smoke bombs covered you in ash and burnt your eyes.

Once over the bridge they flooded into the park behind the stadium, creating a terrifying spectacle. As far as the eye could see, hundreds of thousands of people waving flags, countless flares illuminating the space like daylight.

At the centre was a large stage from which two priests led prayers, followed by more political speeches. To the left and right on a banked verge were the huddled fascist flags of the All-Polish Youth and the National Radical Camp, presenting an image reminiscent of Nuremberg in the 1930s. Masked men ceremonially burnt the flag of the European Union flag.

It is of course important to state that many of those on the march were not neo-nazis or fascists, and were merely there to celebrate the independence of their country. Yet the presence of the extreme far right was so ubiquitous that no one could pretend they did not know who was running the event. Despite this, they were happy to march alongside them, listen to their speeches and join in their chants. The President himself marched just meters ahead of fascist flags, no doubt in earshot of the ONR drummer.

Apart from some small running battles between attendees and stewards to the right of the stage, the day passed in relative peace. Yet that did not make the day's events any less terrifying. The numbers were bigger than expected, dwarfing that of last year, and the nonchalance with which fascists were treated – and the willingness of the President to strike a deal with them – only confirms what trouble Poland is currently in.

The night finished with a firework display and more singing as the crowds slowly dispersed. Back at the Palace of Culture and Science in central Warsaw, the streets had already been cleaned and traffic once again bustled through the streets. ■

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

CHALLENGING PREJUDICE IN SCHOOLS

WHEN THE VIDEO of a young Syrian school kid being wrestled to the ground started circulating on social media, people were shocked. The images were horrendous and have generated outrage, as well as sympathy for the victim. In this instance, the local council and school have 'taken strong action', according to the area's MP, and police are bringing charges. It brought home to people what the small Education team at HOPE not hate deal with every day during term time: the spread of prejudice

and messages of hate into every area of society.

Each year, we launch a Christmas appeal to support an area of HOPE not hate's work. In the past, we've raised money to combat the BNP, to support our work undercover inside far right gangs, and to support community organising. This year, it's a little different – we've asked people to come together to fund our work in school classrooms.

We go in to schools to talk to young people about race, prejudice

and hate. We do this so they can hear an alternative to the messages of hate coursing through social media and society as a whole. We choose where we go carefully. Based on a huge amount of data, we've identified 328 target areas around the country. And using a carefully researched and tested syllabus, our team is desperately working to counter those messages, to teach young people how to spot stereotypes, prejudice and hate so they recognise it when they see it happening around them



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and are empowered to call it out. The team run really interesting, innovate classes, using interactive games, presentations, Q&A sessions, and more, really getting students to engage.

Teachers tell us that they're incredibly grateful for the expert insights of our team. Our team is doing a stellar job in really tough circumstances. This work is hard. We want to put the nuance back into the debate. We don't spout slogans, we get students to think about their own values, and how to put those values into effect around them.

During the last academic year, we reached 16,983 students. We created 608 HOPE not hate Ambassadors – Year 9 pupils who completed a four-week course. We also offer teacher training in how to teach about issues of prejudice and discrimination, and how to spot signs of radicalisation in pupils and what to do next. Evaluations shows that 84% of attendees at our workshops with

no understanding of prejudice come away with a strong understanding of the subject. We know what we do works.

I am really proud of the work the HOPE not hate education team does in schools. But we've got a problem: it is absolutely essential that we don't charge schools for the classes we run, but we don't have the funding we need to continue this work in 2019.

Everyone talks about the importance of educating our youngsters about prejudice. We do that, every single week, in the communities most affected by racist views. Because these are often isolated communities, schools in rural market towns, and forgotten suburbs, we fall between the cracks when it comes to the funding that large organisations give.

We're ambitious for our schools work, and recently HOPE not hate supporters clubbed together to ensure we could send a book about holocaust denial, and a teacher pack, to more than 300 schools

in our target areas. But as things stand, we don't have the funding we need for 2019, in fact, we're £25,000 short.

During 2018, HOPE not hate supporters gave an average of £20.87 each time they donated. We're incredibly grateful. To hit this year's Christmas appeal, and continue our schools work into 2019, we need 1,198 supporters to chip in. If you can support our Christmas appeal, it's really easy to give – just head to hopenothate.org.uk/donate.

I wouldn't ask if this wasn't important. If you can join in with the many supporters who value our schools work, I know we'll hit our target. It is essential that we do. The fight against hatred is as urgent as ever. Every class we're able to reach is another step in the work we need to do to ensure there are fewer kids bullied in school, and more young people with the confidence and understanding to stand up against the bullies.



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